Peer Victimization and the Need to Belong within the Context of Recess

Nicole Franklin, B.A. (Honors)

Child and Youth Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts

Faculty of Social Sciences, Brock University,
St. Catharines, Ontario

Abstract

Within the school setting, recess is often reported as a frequent context for bullying (Vaillancourt et al. 2010), but is currently understudied. The present study utilized a mixed-methods approach in order to examine the frequency of peer victimization at recess and explore how the current context of recess relates to children's sense of belonging. Participants included 464 students between grades 4 to 8 from nine Southern Ontario elementary schools. Self-report measures on peer victimization and belongingness were completed, along with open-ended questions regarding the recess context. Results demonstrated the frequencies of peer victimization at recess, the relationship between victimization and belonging, contextual factors that promote and impede belongingness at recess, and solutions to support children who feel left out.These findings provide further insight for educators and administrators in order to better support children who experience victimization within the recess context.

Keywords: peer victimization, the need to belong, recess, mixed-methods

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to the following people who have offered their support and guidance throughout this journey:

First and foremost, thank you to my advisor, Dr. Lauren McNamara. Lauren, thank you for providing so many learning opportunities throughout the last two year which have helped me grow both personally and professionally. I greatly appreciate all of the time and effort you have put into helping me successfully complete my thesis.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my internal committee members, Dr. Ken Lodewyk and Dr. John McNamara, as well as my external examiner, Dr. Debra Harwood, for your insightful comments and critical questions.

Additionally, I would like to thank my Child and Youth Studies colleagues for their continuous encouragement. It has been an honour to work alongside such talented individuals and I am forever grateful for our friendship.

I am also indebted to Andy, who has shown me unwavering support and patience. Thank you for being there every step of the way, and always helping me to see the bigger picture.

Most importantly, none of this would have been possible without the love and encouragement from my parents, Michael and Laura, and my sister, Melissa. Mom and Dad, thank you for always believing in me and helping me strive to do my best. Melissa, throughout this entire process you have been my constant source of inspiration, I am so proud of everything you have accomplished - this thesis is dedicated to you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter One: Introduction

Schools play a pivotal role in shaping children's academic, social, emotional, and behavioural development (Nickerson, Singleton, Schnurr, & Collen, 2014). Furthermore, as children spend a substantial part of childhood within the school environment, schools are a primary context for social relationships and provide an opportunity to satisfy the need to belong (Cemalcilar, 2010). Belongingness is a fundamental human motive which according to Baumeister and Leary (1995) must be fulfilled for healthy well-being and adaptive functioning. Consequently, it is essential that all children feel safe and supported while at school in order to promote positive peer relationships and development.

However, bullying at school has become a widespread problem that affects many children each year. Specifically, research indicates that approximately 20-25% of children and youth are directly involved in bullying as either perpetrators, victims, or both (Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Nansel et al., 2001). In recent years bullying at school has received increased attention in light of school shootings and suicides. While these extreme circumstances are rare (Juvonen & Graham, 2014) research has cited a plethora of negative implications for both the perpetrators and victims involved in bullying. For example, bullying has been linked to anger and aggression as well as to later delinquency and criminality (Olweus, 1993). Meanwhile, peer victimization has been linked to illness, school avoidance, low academic achievement, depression, increased fear and anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide ideation as well as long-term internalizing difficulties such as low self-esteem, anxiety and depression (Craig, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Resulting from these negative consequences it is fundamental that efforts are placed on reducing bullying at school.

In order to gain further insight into school bullying, research done by Vaillancourt and colleagues (2010) investigated where bullying takes place most often at school. This research found that the most frequent places victims reported bullying were the playground/ school yard (71.6%) and outside recess (62.7%). Furthermore, students identified unsafe areas within their school as places where there was a lack of adult supervision (Vaillancourt et al., 2010). Specifically, 39% of students reported feeling unsafe during outdoor recess and 17.9% reported feeling unsafe during indoor recess. From this research it is clear than more attention must be placed on the recess context when examining school bullying.

Rationale

Research indicates that children's experiences on the playground can affect and remain with them longer than their educational experience inside the classroom (Thomson, 2007). This emphasizes the need to ensure all children have positive experiences while at recess. However, research on recess is currently limited (McNamara, 2013), and thus there remains little insight into how the context of recess specifically impacts children. In order to examine the frequency of victimization at recess and explore how the current context of recess impacts children's sense of belonging, this research will use a mixed-methods approach. In doing so, it will be possible to illuminate the current recess environment and determine how frequently peer victimization occurs at recess. By conducting this research more light will be shed on this phenomenon and stakeholders may gain a deeper sense of how to support children at recess.

Theoretical Framework: The Need to Belong

The notion that humans have a fundamental need to belong has been put forward by many researchers throughout history. For example, in order to explain human motivation and behaviour, Maslow (1970) developed a theory referred to as the hierarchy of needs. Within this theory, conceptualized as a hierarchal pyramid, a series of basic needs (physiological, safety, belongingness and love, and esteem) must be met before one can progress towards self-actualization. In this way, human behaviour is motivated by the desire to fulfill each of the four most basic needs. Upon gratifying both physiological and safety needs, belongingness and love needs develop. Within this need individuals are highly motivated to gain affectionate relationships with others and in turn feel pain when experiencing loneliness, ostracism, rejection, or friendlessness (Maslow, 1970). Consequently, the need to belong will be utilized as the theoretical framework guiding this thesis. Furthermore, in order to examine peer victimization and the need to belong within the context of recess, this thesis will rely on evolutionary theory, ecological systems theory, and the bio-psycho-social approach. These perspectives will guide the subsequent research questions and provide further insight while interpreting the results.

Evolutionary Theory. Evolutionary theory proposes that the primary goal of life is to reproduce and pass on genes to future generations (Hawley, 1999). As a result, individuals are inherently motivated to gain resources such as social status in order to increase their chances of reproduction. In order to support the need to belong theory with empirical evidence, Baumeister and Leary (1995) reviewed a compilation of research supporting the claim that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant personal relationships" (p.

497). This fundamental need to belong, they suggest, can be attributed to our evolutionary past, as those who formed and maintained relationships had both survival and reproductive benefits. For example, belonging to a group provided protection, shared resources, and reproductive opportunities. According to DeWall and Bushman (2011) social rejection for our ancestors was like a death sentence as it would be difficult to survive in isolation. Consequently, when our need to belong is not fulfilled, we are impacted in many ways, cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. For example, feeling accepted, included, and welcomed is associated with a variety of positive emotions (i.e. happiness, elation, contentment, calm) whereas feeling rejected, excluded, or ignored is associated with strong negative feelings (i.e. anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy, loneliness) (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)

Ecological Systems Theory. In addition, the environment plays an important role in whether bullying behaviour occurs. Ecological systems theory focuses on the interactions between an individual and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979; Neal & Neal, 2013). Through this perspective, recess will be viewed as an ecological system. Consequently, is it essential to address the multi-level mesosystem (i.e. personal relationships with friends and family) and the macro-system (i.e. culture) within which recess operates to better understand the dynamics of peer-victimization and belonging (Brofenbrenner, 1977; Cemalcilar, 2010). Utilizing ecological systems theory, a bullying interaction occurs not only because of the individual characteristics of the child who is bullying, but also because of the interactions between the child and their environment. For example, the role of peers, the actions of teachers and supervisors, the physical characteristics of the school ground, family factors, cultural characteristics and

community factors all interact and in turn impact each other (Swearer & Doll, 2001). Thus for the purposes of this thesis, ecological systems theory will be utilized as an additional lens to view peer-victimization and belonging at recess.

Bio-Psycho-Social Approach. Finally, the bio-psycho-social approach will be utilized to further explain the need to belong. More specifically, the bio-psycho-social approach will be used to explain the negative consequences that occur when our need to belong is not met. For example, research indicates that when children experience peer victimization there are many negative implications that can occur, such as changes to the regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2013), increased levels of depression and anxiety (Hawker & Boulton, 2000) and greater risk for peer maltreatment (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006).These consequences will be discussed further within the literature review section of this thesis.

Research Questions

The goal of this thesis is to answer the following research questions, which are organized into tiers.

Tier One: The Scope of Victimization at Recess.

1.1 How often is each form of victimization examined in the questionnaire (verbal, physical, social) experienced at recess?

1.2 How does the form and frequency of victimization vary by sex and developmental level?

Tier Two: Victimization and Belonging at Recess.

2.1 What is the correlation between victimization and belonging?

2.2 How does the frequency and various forms of victimization relate to children's sense of belonging at recess?

2.3 What are the contextual factors of recess that promote and/ or impede children's sense of belonging?

Tier Three: Support for Children at Recess.

3.1 What do students believe schools could do to support children at recess who feel as though they do not belong?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following literature review will be divided into three main sections in order to explore bullying behaviour and the need to belong within the school context – specifically at recess. This will be done by first reviewing research on school bullying that examines the current definition, the forms and functions of bullying, as well as the various participant roles involved in bullying situations. In doing so, a deeper understanding of what bullying entails will be gained. This will be followed with research addressing the need to belong. Baumeister and Leary (1995) have postulated that human behaviour is motivated by a fundamental need to belong to social groups. The context of the school will be examined specifically as a place where the need to belong is fostered as it provides the opportunity to either positively or negatively impact children's sense of belonging. Furthermore, negative bio-psycho-social implications will be discussed for those who experience peer victimization. Finally, the third section will address the intended benefits of recess as well as explore the context of recess as a specific site where the need to belong may be exasperated for children. Research indicates bullying perpetration and victimization occur at an increased rate during recess (Vaillancourt et al., 2010) which in turn may be related to the unique contextual factors of recess.

What is Bullying?

The Definition of Bullying. The definition of bullying has evolved over time with the advancement of research in order to capture the complexity of this social phenomenon (Olweus, 2013). In 1993, Olweus generally defined bullying as occurring when someone "is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (p.9). Olweus (1993) classified negative actions as incidences in which

someone intentionally causes or attempts to cause injury or discomfort onto another person within an imbalanced power relationship. Currently, researchers often characterize bullying as a subset of aggressive behaviour, involving intentionality, repetition, and an imbalance of power (Vaillancourt et al., 2008). According to Pepler and colleagues (2006) bullying is a "relationship problem - a form of aggression that unfolds in the context of a relationship in which one child asserts interpersonal power though aggression" (p.376). It is important to note that the power imbalance asserted by the bully can arise in many different ways including:

> "a physical advantage such as size and strength…a social advantage such as a dominant social role (i.e. teacher compared to a student), higher social status in a peer group (i.e. popular versus rejected student), strength in numbers (i.e. group of children bullying a solitary child) or through systemic power (i.e. racial or cultural groups, sexual minorities, economic disadvantage, disability)" (Craig, Pepler & Blais, 2007, p.466).

Thus in a bullying situation the perpetrator is able to identify a vulnerability within their victim, such as obesity, stuttering, a learning disability, sexual orientation, or family background, and in turn use this knowledge to inflict distress (Craig et al., 2007).

While in the past bullying was often overlooked and dismissed as a common part of childhood, the topic of bullying has received increased attention. As a result, growing empirical research has been able to provide further insight into this phenomenon and work towards resolving conceptual and methodological issues (Olweus, 2013). Consequently, the definition of bullying remains in fluctuation as researchers continue to debate aspects of Olweus' original definition. For example, Volk, Dane, and Marini

(2014) have proposed to redefine bullying by utilizing theoretical and empirical support in order to increase the accuracy of the definition. Specifically they have conceptualized bullying as occurring "when an individual uses goal-directed behaviour that causes significant harm to another individual within the context of a power imbalance" (Volk et al., 2014, p.4). In this way a more accurate representation of bullying is provided that encompasses all aspects of bullying behaviour.

Due to fluctuations in the definition, it is important to mention methodological issues which currently impact bullying research. For example, while Olweus (1993) originally included repetition as a part of the definition, recent research has indicated that one occurrence of bullying can be just as harmful (Olweus, 2013). As a result, Volk and colleagues (under review) suggest single severe acts of bullying should be included within the new definition. Consequently, current prevalence rates of bullying fluctuate depending on how bullying is defined while conducting research. Furthermore, research done by Vaillancourt and colleagues (2008) found that children's definitions of bullying rarely include the three main features of bullying typically utilized by researchers. Specially, when asked to define bullying only 1.7% of children included the concept of intentionality, 6% of children incorporated repetition, and 26% of children included the notion of a power imbalance within their definition (Vaillancourt et al., 2008). Due to the vast differences children have regarding their definition of bullying, it may prove important to provide an explicit definition of bullying before conducting research with children. The following section will further explore bullying by addressing the various forms and functions that bullying assumes.

Forms and Functions. Bullying encompasses a heterogeneous group of behaviours that can be presented in different forms (direct versus indirect) and functions (proactive versus reactive) (Craig et al., 2007; Little, Brauner, Jones, Nock, & Hawley, 2003; Marini, Dane, & Kennedy, 2010). Direct forms of bullying occur in a face-to-face manner and include behaviours such as physical aggression (i.e. hitting, pushing, tripping) and verbal aggression (i.e. threatening and name-calling). This form of bullying often involves intimidating, humiliating, or belittling while in the presence of others (Craig et al., 2007; Juvonen & Graham, 2014). In contrast, indirect bullying occurs without confrontation and includes spreading rumours, backstabbing, and social exclusion. This form of bullying often involves relational manipulation intended to damage a person's reputation or social status (Craig et al., 2007; Juvonen & Graham, 2014). In addition, due to advances in technology, cyberbullying has emerged as a new form of indirect bullying amongst adolescence as it occurs through electronic communication (Pieschl, Porsch, Kahl, & Klockenbusch, 2013). Cyberbullying is a unique form of indirect aggression as the perpetrator is able to remain largely anonymous and has the ability to reach a large audience within a short amount of time (Pieschel et al., 2013).

Sex differences. In regards to sex differences, research has repeatedly found that boys employ more direct forms of bullying, specifically physical aggression, in comparison to girls (Craig, 1998; Juvonen & Graham, 2014). In a study conducted by Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, and Jones (2012) the ratio of boys to girls (aged 7-11) involved in direct bullying was approximately 9:1, while the opposite pattern was found for indirect bullying. While boys participate in more physical bullying, research indicates

that boys and girls experience relatively the same amount of indirect bullying, despite popular belief (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Olweus, 1993). Furthermore, research suggests that as a whole, males are more likely to be both perpetrators as well as targets of bullying in comparison to females (Nansel et al., 2001).

Developmental differences. Moreover, in terms of developmental trajectories, research indicates notable differences in the forms bullying employed as well as the frequency. For example, as boys increase in age they participate in less physical aggression and more indirect aggression (Smith et al., 2012). A study conducted by Fite, Colder, Lochman, and Wells (2008) examined the developmental trajectories of proactive and reactive aggression in children from grade 5 to 9. The results from this study found that both proactive and reactive aggression levels peak at grade 6 and then begin to decline. Similarly research by Pellegrini and Long (2002) found that both aggression and victimization tend to decrease during the last two years of elementary school. In contrast, a cross-sectional study done by Pepler and colleagues (2006) found that bullying peaked in grade 9 when students were experiencing a transition from elementary to high school. A common finding within the research literature is that bullying tends to peak during times of social uncertainty or transition (Juvonen & Graham, 2014), such as when children enter middle school (grade 6) or high school (grade 9).

The objective (or function) for participating in bullying behaviour ranges from proactive to reactive aggression. Proactive aggression (also called instrumental or "cold-blooded" aggression) is goal-oriented, intentional aggression that is motivated by obtaining desired goals, such as gaining a material object or higher social status (Card & Little, 2006; Fite et al., 2008). On the other hand, reactive aggression (also called

defensive or “hot-blooded” aggression) occurs in response to a perceived provocation, such as pushing a peer after being made fun of, and is usually driven by frustration (Card & Little, 2006; Fite et al., 2008). According to Card and Little (2006) proactive aggression can be explained by Bandura’s (1973) Social Learning Theory which posits that individuals behave in aggressive ways because they have learned it is an effective way to obtain their desired goals. Meanwhile, reactive aggression can be explained by Berkowitz’s (1978) frustration-aggression model which proposes that aggression is a hostile response to frustration (Card & Little, 2006). In general, research indicates that bullying behaviour is more strongly related to proactive rather than reactive aggression (Salmivalli, 2010) as the bully is intentionally participating in this behaviour.

Utilizing an evolutionary perspective, Volk and colleagues (2014), suggest the three main functional (goal-directed) purposes of bullying include: reproduction, resources and reputation (or dominance). In this light, bullying behaviour is viewed an evolutionary adaptation that provides benefits for the perpetrator (Volk, Camilleri, Dane, & Marini, 2012). The first function: bullying for reproduction, is related to gaining attention from the opposite sex in order to increase mating opportunities (Volk et al., 2012). For example, a study done by Olthof and Goossens (2007) which examined bullying behaviour in 10 to 13 year old children, found that among girls, involvement in bullying was related to a desire to be accepted by boys. Meanwhile, bullying for resources includes demanding and taking items from others, such as toys. Finally, the third function: bullying for reputation (or dominance), is related to gaining social status or power within a group (Salmivalli, 2010; Volk et al., 2012). This is a common function

for bullying during early adolescence, as this is a period of time when social status within a group is particularly important (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010).

The decision to utilize bullying behaviours as a strategy to gain resources involves a cost-benefit analysis, in which prospective bullies weigh the personal and environmental factors that contribute to their odds of success versus failure (Volk et al., 2012). Factors that may enhance a bully's success include: body size, positive peer support, the target's weakness, and lax supervision; whereas factors such as personal weakness, likely adult punishment, negative peer responses, and the target's defences increase the costs of engaging in bullying behaviour (Volk et al., 2012). By weighing the costs and benefits, the bully is able to determine whether it is advantageous to employ bullying behaviour in order to reach their desired goals. As a result, certain environments, such as those involving lax supervision, may inadvertently promote bullying behaviour as a viable option that is advantageous for the perpetrator.

Children's Roles in School Bullying. Bullying is recognized as a group process, in which children assume different roles (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). While much emphasis has been placed on the dyadic relationship between the bully and the victim, research indicates that peers play an important role as bystanders in the bullying process. For example, a study by Hawkins, Pepler and Craig (2001) found that peers were present in 88% of bullying episodes, but only intervened 19% of the time. Furthermore, a study conducted by O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999), which examined peer involvement in bullying episodes on the school playground, found that peers spend 54% of their time reinforcing bullies, 21% of their time actively modelling bullies, and only 25% of the time intervening on behalf of the victim. While

research demonstrates that standing up for the victim is an effective way to stop bullying episodes, it is evident that bystanders rarely intervene (Hawkins et al., 2001; O'Connel et al., 1999).

Salmivalli and colleagues (1996) identified six different participant roles in a bullying situation: the victim, the bully, the reinforcer of the bully, the assistant to the bully, the defender of the victim, and the outsider. Similarly, Olweus (2001) developed a conceptual diagram referred to as the 'Bullying Circle' which identifies eight different roles in a bullying situation: the victim, the bully, the followers/henchmen, the supporters (passive bullies), passive supporters (possible bullies), the disengaged onlookers, the possible defenders, and defenders of the victim. Therefore, due to the various roles peers play in a bullying episode it is of upmost importance that interventions teach effective strategies for children to intervene in these types of situations (Hawkins et al., 2001). The following section will address each role within a bullying episode as children classified into each role demonstrate different characteristics (Salmivalli, 2010).

Children who are classified as victims of bullying demonstrate many psychosocial problems, including depression and anxiety (Craig, 1998), as well as low self-esteem (Olweus, 1993), and academic difficulties (Schwartz, Gorman, Nakamoto, & Toblin, 1997). In addition, Nansel and collegues (2001) found that children identified as victims also reported difficulty making friends, poorer relationships with classmates, and greater feelings of loneliness. However, it is unknown whether bullying experiences cause psychosocial problems or whether children with psychosocial problems simply make good targets for bullies, as this link is bidirectional and complex (Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Vaillancourt, Brittain, McDougal, & Duku, 2013). Research has classified the

victims of bullying into two different categories, the submissive victim and the provocative victim (Olweus, 1993). Submissive victims tend to be more anxious and insecure as well as more sensitive and quiet. These characteristics make them easy targets as they are less likely to retaliate against their aggressor, therefore making the costs of bullying these types of victims relatively low for the bully.

On the other hand, a smaller group of victims have been identified as provocative victims (Olweus, 1993), frequently referred to as bully-victims (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). This subgroup of victimized children have been identified as not only experiencing victimization but also participating in bullying behaviour by employing reactive aggression (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Bully-victims are classified as both anxious and aggressive and display emotional regulation problems as well as impulsive and hyperactive behaviours (Schwartz, 2000). Due to these characteristics they also make good targets as they provide an emotional response which is rewarding for the bully (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Research by Salmivalli and Nieminen (2002) found that bully-victims were classified as the most aggressive group of children within a classroom from both teacher and peer ratings as they employed both reactive and proactive aggression. Furthermore, research indicates that bully-victims demonstrate more psychosocial problems than children who are only aggressive or who are only victims (Burk et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2000). It is therefore important that bully-victims are classified as their own entity, as they display unique patterns of behaviour (Schwartz, 2000).

In contrast, children identified as bullies also display psychosocial and adjustment problems, such as: poorer academic achievement as well as higher rates of smoking and

drinking (Nansel et al., 2001). Researchers have categorized bullies into two separate groups: active and passive (Carrera, DePalma, & Lameiras, 2011). Active bullies employ the proactive function of bullying, as they intentionally harass their victims, meanwhile, passive bullies – also referred to as followers or henchman (Olweus, 1993) participate in bullying episodes in response to the manipulation of an active bully and in turn reinforce the bullying behaviour (Carrera et al., 2011; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012).

The role of the bystander has been categorized into three separate groups: defenders, reinforcers, and passive onlookers (Pöyhönen et al., 2012). Children who identify as defenders often directly confront the bully, seek help, or comfort the victim, whereas reinforcers typically display approval by smiling, laughing, or actively taunting (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). On the other hand, children who remain uninvolved are characterized as not taking sides with anyone involved (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). A study conducted by Pöyhönen and colleagues (2012) examined children's (aged 9-11) motivation as either a defender, reinforcer, or passive onlooker during bullying episodes. This study found that children who were defenders felt they would be successful in ending a bullying episode and also felt their social status would increase as a result of stepping in. In contrast, reinforcers often felt that defending the victim would not bring about any benefits for them nor their social status and they often did not care about the harassment done to the victim. Finally, children identified as remaining passive wanted the bullying to stop but did not feel their efforts would be successful if they intervened (Pöyhönen et al., 2012). In summary, a child's motivation for intervening during a bullying episode was found to be impacted by various factors, including perceived self-

efficacy, impact to social status, as well as the plight of the victim (Pöyhönen et al., 2012).

The Need to Belong

Within the subsequent section of this thesis the need to belong will be further explained by utilizing empirical research, as it plays a fundamental role in children's social interaction patterns. In addition, school climate will be examined specifically as a component of the school environment that can impact a child's sense of belonging. Finally, this section will end by looking at the bio-psycho-social implications that arise for those who do not feel a sense of belonging.

Recently, Gere and MacDonald (2010) provided an update on the need to belong by building off of Baumeister and Leary's (1995) work with new research. Specifically, Gere and MacDonald (2010) examined the immediate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural reactions to social rejection and acceptance. While Baumesiter and Leary (1995) indicated that individuals who experience rejection become motivated to seek social connection with others, Gere and MacDoanld (2010) found that often individuals who experience rejection actually employ antisocial behaviours as they are motivated to retaliate rather than connect. This has been mainly found when individuals are provoked and are not provided with the "opportunity to reconnect with others" (Gere & MacDoanld, 2010, p. 12). For example, a review by Leary, Twenge, and Quinlivan (2006) found that rejection was linked with higher rates of aggression. They suggest that while this behaviour may seem counter-productive, as these individuals are less likely to gain a sense of belonging, there may be benefits using this behaviour, such as: releasing frustration, influencing others and establishing control (Leary et al., 2006). Therefore

while the need to belong has been found to be adaptive, as it motivates people to seek out connections with others when this need is not fulfilled, it can also be maladaptive. This could specifically explain the behaviour of children classified as bully-victims as they often employ reactive aggression as a result of being rejected and victimized themselves.

School Climate. The school context, and more specifically school climate plays an important role in children's sense of school belonging and connectedness (Cemalcilar, 2010). Cohen, McCabe, Michelli and Pickeral, (2009) have defined school climate as the quality and character of school life, based on patterns of experience within a school reflecting the norms, goals, values, learning practices, and organizational structures. Furthermore, by utilizing a social-ecological perspective, it has been postulated that bullying exists within the larger context of school climate (Nickerson et al., 2014). In order to explain the school climate factors that impact student's sense of belonging, Cemalcilar (2010) designed a conceptual model (Figure 1). Specifically, he proposed that student's social relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers as well as the structural / contextual characteristics of the school (i.e. physical features, supporting resources, and perceived violence) all contribute to children's overall sense of belonging. By conducting a structural equation model analysis, Cemalicilar (2010) found student's sense of belonging was strongly predicted by both school climate factors. Specifically, the social relations variable had a medium to large path coefficient effect (.437) and the structural/contextual variable had a medium path coefficient effect (.326). Meanwhile, student-student relations and perceived violence had small effects on sense of school belonging on their own, .274 and -.134 respectively (Cemalicilar, 2010).

In summary, the social relationships children have at school as well as the structural aspects of the school environment both play an important part in children's overall sense of belonging. These factors will be discussed further when addressing the contextual factors specific to recess. However, before addressing these issues, the bio-psycho-social implications for peer victimized children will be briefly discussed as experiencing victimization "attacks" one's sense of belonging (Hawker & Boulton, 2001).

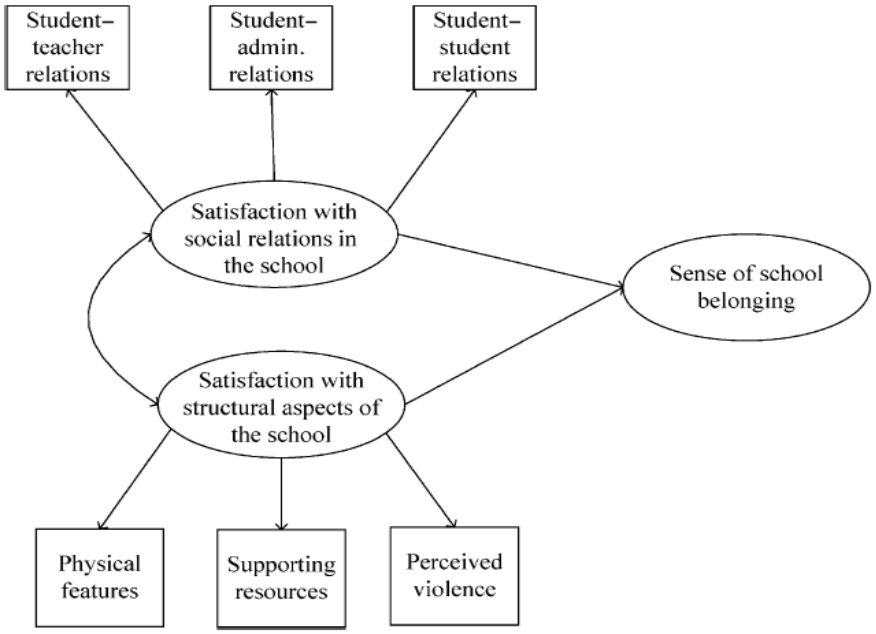

Figure 1. Cemalcilar's (2010) proposed model of student's sense of school belonging.

Biological Impact of Victimization. In terms of biological implications, recent research done by Vaillancourt, Hymel and McDougall (2013) highlighted the biological impacts of peer victimization in terms of both immediate and lasting consequences. For example, Vaillancourt et al. (2013) discussed neuroendocrine research done by Knack, Jensen-Campbell, and Baum (2011) indicating that peer victimization is linked to the dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, the stress response

system in the body. Specifically, children who experience peer victimization produce lower levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, than their nonbullied peers. Furthermore, genetics research indicates that peer victimization influences DNA methylation, a mechanism which suppresses or activates a gene. Particularly, children who were bullied between the ages of 5 and 10 were found to have increased DNA methylation in the serotonin transporter gene (Ouellett-Morin et al. 2012 as cited in Vaillancourt et al. 2013). This research demonstrates that experiencing peer victimization can produce changes within our DNA and stress responses specifically at the biological level.

Psychological Impact of Victimization. In addition to biological implications, children who experience peer victimization also demonstrate negative psychological consequences such as mental health problems. For example, Engle, McElwain and Lasky (2011) conducted a longitudinal study to determine the importance of friendship on children's development. In this study 567 children were followed from kindergarten to grade three to chart the presence and quality of their friendships. Results from this study indicated that children with either no friendships or low quality friendships in kindergarten were more likely to demonstrate more externalizing behaviour compared to children with high quality friendships. Moreover, a meta-analysis done by Hawker and Boulton (2000) found that peer victimized children showed higher levels of depression and anxiety as well as lower levels of self-esteem. This research is in line Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and Baumeister and Leary's (1995) need to belong theory as children who do not have their belongingness needs met experience negative feels as a way to motivate them to fulfill this need.

Social Impact of Victimization. Finally, research consistently points to the negative social implications of children who experience peer victimization. For example, a longitudinal study done by Buhs and colleagues (2006) followed children in the United States from kindergarten to grade five to examine patterns of peer exclusion and victimization. The results from this study demonstrated that children who were less accepted by their classmates were at greater risk for peer maltreatment in subsequent grades. Furthermore, chronic peer exclusion was related to classroom participation and school engagement as children who experienced exclusion at school were less likely to participate in class discussion and activities (Buhs et al., 2006). In addition, research by Engel et al. (2011) found that children without friends in kindergarten had a higher likelihood of having no friends in grade three, indicating there is some stability in friendship patterns over time. Consequently it is important to ensure children who are experiencing difficulty developing and maintaining positive peer relationships receive additional support in order to promote optimal development and overall well-being.

The Benefits of Recess

Recess is conceptualized as a part of the school day that provides children with the opportunity to have a break from the cognitive tasks in the classroom, as well as a chance to engage in physical activities and peer interactions (Holmes, Pellegrini & Schmidt, 2006).Current research highlights the link between recess activity and the cognitive, physical, social and emotional benefits that dynamically contribute to children's academic success and overall development. The following section will examine literature demonstrating the benefits of recess for children.

Cognitive and Academic Benefits. Advocates addressing the cognitive and academic benefits of recess base their rationale on two theoretical positions: massed versus distributed practice and the cognitive immaturity hypothesis (CIH). Massed versus distributed practice indicates that learning is maximized when effort on a task is distributed across time rather than concentrated (or massed) without a break (Holmes et al., 2006). Research indicates that children learn better and more quickly when they are given breaks on a task and their effort is distributed (Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1997). This was demonstrated in a study done by Holmes et al. 2006 which examined preschool children's classroom attention before and after recess at elementary schools in the United States. Findings from this study revealed that classroom attention was much higher following recess. The authors concluded that recess rejuvenates young children as it helps them attend to classroom activities after a break (Holmes et al., 2006).

The second theoretical position, the CIH, indicates that young children do not process information the same way as older children due to lack of experience (Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1997). As a result, according to the CIH, younger children experience greater benefits from recess as they require frequent breaks from high-level cognitive tasks (Holmes et al., 2006). According to Pellegrini and Bjorklund (1997) this is because younger children tend to experience a buildup of cognitive interference with repeated cognitive tasks. Thus, by drastically changing activities (i.e. going outside for recess) rather than just switching activities, they are able to be more effective on subsequent tasks.

To further support the research on the cognitive and academic benefits of recess, research done by Barros, Silver and Stein (2009) examined the amount of recess that

children aged 8 to 9 received in the United States and compared this to their group classroom behaviour using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. The findings from this study indicated that having at least one daily recess was associated with better teacher ratings of class behaviour, as children without recess had an overall lower score on their teacher rating scale (Barros et al., 2009). These results complement findings from Holmes et al. (2006) which indicated that recess supported and improved children's classroom attention. While this research indicates that recess has cognitive and academic benefits this cannot be generalized to all children as it is based solely on children in the United States. As indicated earlier, research on recess is currently limited and therefore more research is needed to determine whether these benefits are found for children in Canada and other parts of the world.

Physical Benefits. Physical activity offers multiple benefits for children's development, including improvements to psychological well-being, bone health, and motor skills (Ridgers, Salmon, Parrish, Stanley & Okley, 2012). However, research indicates that many children have lower physical activity levels than recommended for good health (Verstraete, Cardon, De Clercq &De Bourdeaudhuij, 2006). Therefore recess can be viewed as an important part of the school day as it provides an opportunity for children to be physically active. Conversely, research on recess suggests that due to lack of activities and equipment available to children on the playground, many children are not reaping the physical benefits of recess (McNamara, 2013; Verstraete et al., 2006). In order to increase physical activity at recess a study done by Verstraete et al. (2006) in Belgium provided 4 schools with play equipment and measured increases in their physical activity levels through a pre and post-test design. Results from this study

indicated that by providing children with play equipment during recess it was possible to effectively increase activity levels (Verstraete et al., 2006).

Social and Emotional Benefits. Interactions with peers are important as they provide opportunities for children to practice important social and emotional skills such as cooperation, conflict resolution, emotion regulation, and perspective-taking (Engle et al., 2011). Research indicates that recess can provide numerous social and emotional benefits as it offers a space for children to develop and refine their social and emotional skills (Ramstetter, Murray, & Garner, 2010). According to Pellegrini (2005) recess is one of the few spaces left at school that promotes peer interaction as school mainly emphasizes academic learning, not developing social and emotional skills. However, a meta-analysis conducted by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011) found that by including social and emotional learning programs within school, students academic performance increased by 11-percentile points. Therefore, while schools are placing an increased emphasis on test scores and curriculum expectations, it may prove beneficial to use recess as a catalyst to promote social and emotional skills as this not only benefits their peer relationships but also their academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

Positive peer relationships are important for children as they provide a wealth of beneficial outcomes (Kendrick, Jutengren & Stattin, 2012). For example, the friendship protective hypothesis indicates that having a friend helps to buffer against negative peer experiences and their subsequent outcomes (Kendrick et al., 2012). This was demonstrated in a study by Kendrick et al. (2012) which found that children with higher levels of perceived support from their friends experienced lower levels of bullying and

victimization one year later. Moreover, Engle et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study to determine the importance of friendship on children's development. In this study 567 children were followed from kindergarten to grade three to chart the presence and quality of their friendships. Results from this study indicated that children with either no friendships or low quality friendships in kindergarten were more likely to demonstrate more externalizing behaviour compared to children with high quality friendships. Furthermore, children without friends in kindergarten had a higher likelihood of having no friends in grade three, indicating there is some stability in friendship patterns over time (Engle et al., 2011).

Children with deficits in their social skills are more likely to be rejected by their peers which in turn leads to negative outcomes, such as social, emotional, and behavioural problems (Pellegrini, 2005; McNamara, 2013). For example, a longitudinal study done by Buhs, Ladd, and Herald (2006) followed children in the United States from kindergarten to grade five to examine patterns of peer exclusion and victimization. The results from this study demonstrated that children who were less accepted by their classmates were at greater risk for peer maltreatment in subsequent grades. Furthermore, chronic peer exclusion was related to classroom participation, as children who experienced exclusion at school were less likely to participate in class discussion and activities (Buhs et al., 2006). Therefore by utilizing recess as a space to promote positive peer relationships, children with social skill difficulties can begin to receive the social and emotional benefits of positive peer relationships and recess.

The Context of Recess

While recess is intended to provide cognitive, physical, social and emotional benefits for children, (Ramstetter et al., 2010) research indicates there are several factors that interfere with children's attainment of an effective recess (McNamara, 2013). Specifically, social conflict, lack of activities, lack of equipment, and minimal staff support were all identified as factors that undermined the developmental benefits of recess in four southern Ontario schools (McNamara, 2013). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, within the school setting, episodes of bullying are most often reported at recess (Olweus, 1993; Vaillancourt et al., 2010). Therefore, in order to address peer victimization it is important to explore the unique contextual factors specific to recess that may increase occurrences of peer victimization and as a result reduce student's sense of belonging.

To begin, recess is the one time during the school day characterized as an opportunity to interact with peers of all different ages under conditions of minimal adult supervision (Doll, Murphy & Song, 2003). According to McNamara (2013) and McNamara, Vaantaja, Dunseith, and Franklin (2014) the ratio of students (including kindergarten students) to yard duty supervisors and teachers at recess is inconsistent and ranges anywhere between 50: 1 and 200:1. Meanwhile, in the classroom, the ratio of students to teachers is approximately 20:1 and 26:2 for full day kindergarten programs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). Thus, it is apparent that the levels of supervision outside on the playground are substantially less than when inside the classroom. Research by Vaillancourt and colleagues (2010) found that the most frequent places victims reported bullying were the playground/ school yard (71.6%) and outside recess (62.7%).

Furthermore, students identified unsafe areas within their school as places where there was a lack of adult supervision (Vaillancourt et al., 2010). Specifically, 39% of students reported feeling unsafe during outdoor recess and 17.9% reported feeling unsafe during indoor recess. Evidently, in order to enhance school climate and reduce bullying, more adult supervision is needed during recess.

However, due to the lack of adult supervision and assistance, the recess context provides authentic practice for children's social competence (Doll et al., 2003). Specifically, recess affords children the opportunity to develop and refine their social and emotional skills (Ramstetter et al., 2010), as well as develop friendship networks and improve conflict management skills (Doll et al., 2003). According to Pellegrini (2005) recess is one of the few spaces left at school that promotes peer interaction. Interactions with peers are important as they provide opportunities for children to practice skills such as cooperation, conflict resolution, emotion regulation, and perspective-taking (Engle et al., 2011). Furthermore, positive peer relationships are important for children as they provide a wealth of beneficial outcomes (Kendrick et al., 2012). For example, the friendship protective hypothesis indicates that having a friend helps to buffer against negative peer experiences and their subsequent outcomes (Kendrick et al., 2012). This was demonstrated in a study by Kendrick et al. (2012) which found that children with higher levels of perceived support from their friends experienced lower levels of bullying and victimization one year later. However, children with deficits in their social skills were more likely to be rejected by their peers which in turn led to negative outcomes, such as social, emotional, and behavioural problems (Buhs et al., 2006). This is in line with Cemalcilar's (2010) model, as children who are not satisfied with their social

relationships have a reduced sense of belonging. Due to the fact that bullying is known to be a group process (Olweus, 1993; Salmivalli, 1996, 2010) it is important that children at recess do not adopt participant roles that are harmful to others. Therefore while recess can promote important social and emotional skills, the recess environment could be a challenging part of the school day for children who experience victimization as well as those who have social skills deficits and/or difficulty making friends. Therefore, while peer interactions play an important role in development, it is fundamental that adequate supervision is provided during recess to ensure that negative interactions such as bullying do not occur.

In addition, the unstructured environment of recess is another unique contextual factor, that while important for children (Barros et al., 2009), is also associated with increases in bullying (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010). According to McNamara (2013) while some children are able to negotiate the unstructured environment of recess, there are other children who find this task challenging. In conjunction with this, the recess environment also lacks play equipment and activities, which, in turn, can lead to boredom and maladaptive patterns of behaviour, such as exclusion and victimization (McNamara, 2013). Consequently, there are few places to hide for children who are neglected or rejected from their peers at recess. As McNamara (2013) recounts on her research examining the recess environment: "In all participating schools, [there were some] children [who] were consistently and obviously excluded from the entire student body. These children often walked the perimeter of the school or hung by the door or wall" (p.13). Unfortunately, the current recess context provides little support or protection for children who have difficulty forming and maintaining positive

relationships with their peers, which inevitably reduces their sense of belonging (Cemalcilar, 2010).

To address this issue further, a collaborative action research project done by McNamara, Vaantaja, Dunsieth, and Franklin (2014) explored the context of recess on children's developmental trajectories. According to the students (grades 4-8) recess provides a unique space to connect with peers that is not afforded in the classroom. When children at recess were provided with play equipment and activities that ranged from structured to unstructured they felt more connected to their peers. Thus, by providing well-supported opportunities to connect with peers at recess, children were able to cultivate positive peer relationships (McNamara et al., in press), which in turn fosters a sense of belonging (Cemalcilar, 2010). Therefore as addressed in Cemalcilar's (2010) model, a recess environment which satisfies children's social relationships and encompasses structural components that are supportive in nature (i.e. supervision, structure, and a range of activities), contribute to a child's sense of belonging.

Based on these findings it is evident that recess has the potential to provide children with several cognitive, physical and social emotional benefits. Meanwhile, research suggests that recess is largely overlooked as an opportunity to support children (McNamara, 2013). In turn many children are not reaping the intended benefits of recess as it has become crowded, unorganized and minimally supervised (McNamara, 2013; Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005). Consequently, this thesis will explore peer victimization and the need to belong within the context of recess, in order to specifically examine how the recess context impacts these two constructs.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

In order to examine victimization and belonging within the context of recess, this research utilized both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A mixed-methods approach was specifically chosen as both the qualitative and quantitative data enrich the overall results and offer valuable information that one method on its own could not provide (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). More specifically, this thesis utilized the concurrent triangulation mixed-methods approach as outline by Hanson and colleagues (2005). Within this design the quantitative and qualitative data receive equal priority and are collected and analyzed at the same time. After the data is analyzed the results are then integrated together in order to confirm and corroborate the overall findings of the study. In regards to this thesis, the quantitative data provided descriptive information on the overall scope of victimization at recess, how the form and frequency of victimization vary by age and sex, as well as the relationship between victimization and belonging. On the other hand, the qualitative data provided in-depth information from the students regarding the contextual factors that promote and impede belongingness at recess, as well as ideas on how schools can support children who feel as though they do not belong. Consequently, the findings from both approaches were able to inform each other and provide a deeper understanding of peer-victimization and belonging within the recess context.

Participants

The participants for this research were selected from a larger study exploring student's thoughts and experiences during recess. Access was gained to this database into

order to address the unique research questions of this thesis. The sample includes 464 students between grades 4 to 8 from nine schools in Southern Ontario. There were a total of 254 boys (54.7%) and 210 girls (45.3%). Students were categorized into two developmental levels. Developmental level one comprised of the junior students: grades 4, 5, and 6 and included 355 students (72.2%). Developmental level two comprised the intermediate students: grades 7 and 8 and included 129 students (27.8%). The decision was made to collapse grades into two developmental groups, as this would allow comparisons to be made between the junior and intermediate students. Previous bullying and victimization studies have also reported prevalence data by collapsing multiple ages together (Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Refer to table 1 for further details regarding the specific number of boys and girls from each developmental level.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of Participants.

Demographic Information	**Boys**		**Girls**	
	Frequency (*n*)	**Percentage (%)**	**Frequency (*n*)**	**Percentage (%)**
Developmental Level 1	**180**	**38.8**	**155**	**33.4**
Grade 4	59	12.7	48	10.4
Grade 5	62	13.4	53	11.4
Grade 6	59	12.7	54	11.6
Developmental Level 2	**74**	**15.9**	**55**	**11.9**
Grade 7	33	7.1	22	4.8
Grade 8	41	8.8	33	7.1
Total	**254**	**54.7**	**210**	**45.3**

Characteristics of schools.

All nine schools included in this study were located in the same geographic location within Southern Ontario and followed a 'balanced day' schedule. Within a balanced day, schools adopt a schedule in which students have two 40 minutes breaks a day which are divided in two 20 minute breaks: a 20 minute "nutrition break" where students eat lunch, followed by a 20 minute "fitness break" where students go outside for recess. The ratio of students to yard duty supervisors was similar at all nine schools, with approximately 150 students to one supervisor, as is mandated within Ontario education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014).

Measures

Participants completed a questionnaire on Survey Monkey, an online survey program, about their own thoughts regarding various aspects of recess (Appendix A). This questionnaire included quantitative and qualitative components that addressed demographic variables including sex and grade, followed by questions addressing their enjoyment of recess, emotions during recess, frequency of victimization during recess, and feelings of belonging at recess.

Quantitative Component.

Victimization. Students answered three questions addressing the frequency at which they have experienced three types of victimization at recess: verbal, physical, and social. The three items assessing victimization were adapted from Volk and Lagzdins (2009) which originally consisted of six items ($\alpha = .82$). These six items were consolidated into three items in order to reflect verbal, physical, and social victimization. This decision was made in order to reduce the number of questions students were

required to answer on the survey. The item for verbal victimization was, “During recess, I have been teased (made fun of) because of what I believe, look like or say”. The item for physical victimization was, “I have been hit, kicked, or pushed by others on purpose during recess”. Finally, the item for social victimization was, “During recess, it seems like others ignore or exclude me on purpose”. Questions were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *all the time*). The reliability coefficient for this measure was .75.

Belonging. Students answered five questions addressing their perceived sense of belonging. Three items from this measure were retrieved and modified from the Belonging component of Brown and Evan’s (2002) School Connection measure. Brown (1999) created the original School Connection measure which consisted of four components: Commitment, Power, Belonging, and Belief for a total of 16 items ($\alpha = .85$). Through a factor analysis, Brown (1999) found that the 16 items loaded on three factors: Belief, Commitment and Belonging, which explained 49.55% of the variance in School Connection. Of the 16 items within this measure 3 items specifically loaded on Belonging, which are the 3 items used for this thesis. This measure was specifically chosen as it addressed belonging within the school context, items were then modified to specifically address recess. The three items used were: “I can be myself at recess”, “During recess I usually feel accepted, like I belong” and “I have friends during recess”. In addition, two items from this measure were retrieved and modified from Asher and Wheeler’s (1985) Loneliness Questionnaire which consists of 16 items ($\alpha = .90$). These items were: “I feel that there are friends I can turn to in times of need at recess” and “I get along well with others during recess”. These items were selected as they address relating, an important piece of belonging (Brown, 1999). Students responded to all 5 items on a 5-

point scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *all the time*). The reliability coefficient for this measure was .72.

Qualitative Component.

The questionnaire also included open-ended questions to allow the students to provide further insight regarding their recess experiences. Specifically, students listed aspects of recess they liked and disliked, and also indicated how they believe schools could support students who do not feel as though they belong.

***Social Constructivism*.** The social constructivism methodology was specifically utilized to guide the qualitative component of this thesis. According to the social constructivism methodology, the goal of research is to rely on the participants' views (Creswell, 2013). Thus, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the recess context, it is essential to listen to the student's insights, as they spend a considerable amount of time during their childhood in this environment. In doing so, it is possible to illuminate the subjective meanings that the student's attribute to recess and as a result further understand the context of recess.

Justification of Self-Report Methods

Within bullying and victimization research, self-reports are the most preferred method of assessment for both the purposes of research as well for school administrators, as this provides information on the frequency of bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Furthermore, research indicates that self-report measures are highly reliable and valid. For example, a study by Sekol and Farrington (2013) examined the reliability and validity of self, peer and staff reports of bullying and victimization within a correctional care setting. Consequently, results from their research concluded that self-report measures

provide the most reliable and valid data about bullying. Consequently this thesis relied solely on the perceptions of the students by utilizing self-report measures.

Procedure

After the study was approved by the Brock University Ethics Board (Appendix B) as well the District School Board of Niagara Ethics Board, principals were contacted. Upon principal approval, a consent form (Appendix C) was sent home with each child explaining the nature of the study and requesting parent permission for their child's participation. Consent forms were returned to the student's homeroom teacher; only students with approval were invited to participate in the study. Once all consent forms were returned, the students completed the online survey on a designated day at their school. Students without consent were given activity sheets to fill out while participating students completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was conducted on Survey Monkey, an online questionnaire service, which took approximately 20 minutes for the students to complete. Students filled out the questionnaire in their school's computer lab, and were spaced one computer distance apart to ensure the privacy of their responses. No identifying features of the students were requested in order to maintain anonymity. Before the students began the survey the lead researcher explained that participation in this study was strictly voluntary and that they were allowed to stop at any point throughout the survey. In addition, students were informed that their responses would be kept confidential, and that only the research team would have access to their responses. Before participating in the study, students were required to give verbal assent. The lead researcher and research assistants were present in the computer lab while students filled out the questionnaire in order to

clarify questions the students had. Half way through the survey the students were reminded they could withdraw their participation at any time. Upon completion, students were also provided with information on support services from Kids Help Phone, if they felt distressed.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software. Data was previously cleaned and met all required assumptions. In order to address the first research question, descriptive measures were utilized, including measures of central tendencies and frequencies. This provided information regarding how often each form of victimization (verbal, physical, and social) occurred during recess. Next, independent samples t-tests were conducted in order to determine how each frequency of each form of victimization varied by developmental level and sex. To examine the relationship between each form of victimization and belonging, Pearson correlations were computed. Finally, a linear regression analysis was used to test whether each form of victimization predicted children's sense of belonging, after controlling for sex and developmental level. Belongingness served as the dependent variable, sex and developmental level were entered as covariates in the first step and verbal, physical, and social victimization were entered respectively in the second step.

Qualitative Data Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher engaged in a process of moving in analytic circles, rather than a fixed linear approach, as outline by Creswell (2013). Given that data was collected using Survey Monkey, the students typed their responses on the computer program, and their responses were then automatically copied over to an Excel

file. Data was first organized into computer files based on each open-ended question. Due to the large volume of responses, the researcher analyzed each open-ended question separately, completely analyzing one question before moving to the next. After the data was organized into files, the researcher started with the first question, and read through all of the student's responses several times in order to gain a holistic perspective of each question. During this process memos were made in a notebook of the themes that arose repeatedly throughout the data. Next, the researcher went through all of the responses again, marking each statement with a global theme. It is important to note that many responses were marked with more than one global theme, as there was no limit on the number of responses a student could write for a given question. Once this was done, counting was used in order to determine how many times students mentioned each global theme. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) this is important with a large volume of data as it visually displays how often a theme was mentioned, and also protects against bias. Once this was done, the researcher went through the data again, further narrowing global themes into sub-themes. These sub-themes were also counted in order to gain a complete picture of how often each response was reported. This process was then repeated for each opened-ended question. Tables were then created in order to visually display the frequencies for each theme and their sub-themes. These tables are listed within the results section that follows. It is important to note that one faculty member and four undergraduate students also independently examined portions of the student's responses to provide inter-rater reliability for the themes developed for this thesis. Collectively, all themes discussed within this thesis were also identified by other students who examined the data as well.

Chapter Four: Results

The overall goal of this study was to examine victimization and the need to belong specifically within the recess context. A mixed method design was utilized to reveal rates of victimization amongst students in grades 4 to 8, examine the relationship between victimization and belonging, and gain insight from the students on their perspectives of the recess context.

Tier One: The Scope of Victimization at Recess

Descriptive statistics were conducted in order to determine the frequency of victimization experienced at recess. Students responded to three questions addressing the frequency that they experienced verbal, physical, and social victimization on a five point scale ranging from "never" to "all the time". A total frequency score was calculated by adding values for each form of victimization when rated "sometimes", "most of the time", and "all of the time". As a result, physical victimization was experienced most frequently, as approximately 29.1% of children experienced this form of victimization sometimes, most of the time or all of the time. This was followed by verbal victimization (23.9%) and then social victimization (23.0%). The frequencies and percentages of each form of victimization experienced are displayed in Table 2.

In order to determine how the forms of victimization varied by sex, an independent samples t-test was conducted. In regards to verbal victimization, results indicated that there were no significant differences between girls and boys, [t (462) = -1.197, p = .232]. However, significant differences were found between boys and girls on physical victimization, [t (462) = 2.630, p = .009]. More specifically, boys experienced higher levels of physical victimization compared to girls. In addition, significant

differences were found between boys and girls on social victimization, [t (462) = -2.883, p = .004]. Specifically, girls experienced higher levels of social victimization compared to boys. However, in regards to overall victimization, results indicated there were no significant differences between boys and girls [t (462) = -.486, p = .627]. Refer to Table 3 which compares the means and standard deviation scores for boys and girls for each form of victimization.

Table 2.

Frequencies of each Form of Victimization Experienced at Recess (n = 464).

Form of Victimization	**Frequency (*n*)**	**Percentage (%)**
Verbal		
Never	211	45.5
Rarely	142	30.6
Sometimes	84	18.1
Most of the time	19	4.1
All of the time	8	1.7
Physical		
Never	186	40.1
Rarely	143	30.8
Sometimes	98	21.1
Most of the time	29	6.3
All of the time	8	1.7
Social		
Never	223	41.8
Rarely	134	28.9
Sometimes	84	18.1
Most of the time	21	4.5
All of the time	2	0.4

Note. *n* = frequency count; % percentage of participants who fall into that category

Table 3.

Means and Standard Deviations for all Form of Victimization Sorted by Sex (n = 464).

Form of Victimization	**Boys (n = 254)**	**Girls (n = 210)**
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Verbal	1.81 (.96)	1.92 (.98)
Physical	2.10 (.96)	1.85 (1.01)
Social	1.69 (.87)	1.94 (.96)
Composite	1.87 (.76)	1.90 (.82)

In order to determine how the forms of victimization vary by developmental level, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Results indicated there were no significant differences between developmental level on verbal victimization, [t (462) = .634, p = .526], or physical victimization [t (462) = 1.887, p = .060]. However, significant differences were found between developmental level and social victimization, [t (275.153) = 2.659, p = .008]. Specifically, students in developmental level 1 (grades 4, 5, and 6) experienced significantly higher levels of social victimization in comparison to students in developmental level 2. In addition, significant differences were found between developmental level and the composite victimization score [t (462) = 2.021, p = 0.44]. Specifically, students in developmental level 1 experienced significantly higher levels of victimization in comparison to students in developmental level 2. Refer to Table 4 for the means and standard deviation levels of victimization compared by developmental level.

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations for all Form of Victimization Sorted by Developmental Level (n = 464).

Form of Victimization	**Developmental Level 1[a] (n = 335)**	**Developmental Level 2[b] (n = 129)**
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Verbal	1.88 (.99)	1.81 (.93)
Physical	2.04 (1.04)	1.84 (.91)
Social	1.87 (.95)	1.64 (.80)
Composite	1.93 (.82)	1.77 (.70)

Note. [a] Sex was coded with 1 = boy, 2 = girl.
[b] Developmental level was coded with 1 = Grades 4, 5, 6; 2 = Grades 7, 8

In order to determine how victimization varies by developmental level within each sex, separate independent samples t-test were conducted by sex. Results indicated that among boys there were no significant differences in victimization between developmental levels: verbal victimization [t (252) = .146, p = .884], physical victimization [t (252) = -.238, p = .812], social victimization [t (252) = .360, p = .719], or the composite victimization score [t (252) = .095, p = .925]. Girls in the younger cohort reported higher physical victimization [t (130.614) = 3.847, p < .001], social victimization [t (208) = 3.106, p = .002], and composite victimization [t (208) = 2.861, p = .005] whereas no developmental differences were noted in verbal victimization [t (208) = .730, p = .467]. Refer to Table 5 for the means and standard deviation levels of victimization experienced by developmental level and sex.

Table 5.

Means and Standard Deviations for all Forms of Victimization Sorted by Developmental Level and Sex (n =464).

Form of Victimization	Developmental Level 1[a]		Developmental Level 2[b]	
	Boys (n = 180)	**Girls (n = 155)**	**Boys (n = 74)**	**Girls (n = 55)**
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Verbal	1.82 (.98)	1.95 (.99)	1.80 (.92)	1.84 (.94)
Physical	2.09 (1.03)	1.99 (1.06)	2.12 (.92)	1.47 (.77)
Social	1.71 (.90)	2.06 (.99)	1.66 (.82)	1.60 (.78)
Composite	1.87 (.78)	2.00 (.85)	1.86 (.71)	1.63 (.66)

Note. [a] Sex was coded with 1 = boy, 2 = girl.
[b] Developmental level was coded with 1 = Grades 4, 5, 6; 2 = Grades 7, 8

Tier Two: Victimization and Belonging at Recess

In order to determine the relationship between victimization and belonging at recess, Pearson r correlations were computed (see Table 6). Results indicated significant ($p < .001$) moderate to strong negative (-.33 to -.51) relationships between belongingness and each form of victimization.

Table 6.

Correlations Between Belongingness and all Forms of Victimization (n = 464).

	2	**3**	**4**	**5**
1 Belongingness	-.370***	-.327***	-.510***	-.489***
2 Verbal Victimization	-	.502***	.544***	.836***
3 Physical Victimization		-	.451***	.808***
4 Social Victimization			-	.804***
5 Composite Victimization				-

Note. ***p <.001

A two-step linear regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the predictive strength of the three forms of victimization on children's sense of belonging

(step two) after controlling for sex and developmental level in the initial step. Neither sex (β = .013, p = .781) nor developmental level (β = .014, p = .768) were significantly related to belongingness and they accounted for little variance in belongingness (ΔR^2 = .004, $F(2,461) = .080$, $p < .923$). Verbal, physical, and social victimization were entered together in step two and accounted for 27.6% of the variance in belongingness (ΔR^2 = .276, $F(3,458) = 36.330$, $p < .001$) with only verbal (β = -.100, p = .048) and social victimization (β = -.435, $p < .001$) being significantly related to belongingness. Table 6 displays unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients; R squared and adjusted R squared values for all variables in the regression.

Table 7.

Linear Regression of Victimization on Belongingness (n=464).

Variable	**B**	**β**	***t***	***R²***	**Δ *R²***	***p***
Model 1				.000	-.004	
(Constant)	4.109		31.353***			.001
Sex[a]	.017	.013	.279			.781
Developmental Level[b]	.020	.014	.295			.768
Model 2				.284	.276	
(Constant)	4.905		37.034***			.001
Sex[a]	.086	.065	1.596			.111
Developmental Level[b]	-.064	-.044	-1.093			.275
Verbal Victimization	-.068	-.100	-1.980*			.05
Physical Victimization	-.050	-.076	-1.583			.114
Social Victimization	-.312	-.435	-8.775***			.001

Note. [a] Sex was coded with 1 = boy, 2 = girl.
[b] Developmental level was coded with 1 = Grades 4, 5, 6, 2 = Grades 7, 8
[c] *p <.05, **p<.01 ***p <.001

Overall, the quantitative results demonstrated the scope of victimization at recess as well as the relationship between victimization and belonging. Specifically, physical victimization was reported most often during recess. In addition, results indicated that boys experience higher levels of physical victimization, while girls experience higher

levels of social victimization. Overall, victimization occurred more often for students in grades 4, 5 and 6 then for students in grades 7 and 8. While there were no differences amongst boys across developmental level on each form of victimization, girls in the younger age group reported more physical, social, and overall victimization. Verbal victimization did not differ across sex or developmental level. In terms of the relationship between belongingness and each form of victimization, a moderate to strong negative relationship was found. Finally, results indicated that verbal, physical, and social victimization together predicted children's sense of belonging. In order to gain more understanding of victimization and belonging at recess, students also responded to open-ended questions.

Contextual Factors of Recess that Promote and Impede Belonging

The third component of tier two was addressed utilizing qualitative analysis. This research question posed: *What are the contextual factors of recess that promote and impede children's sense of belonging*. In order to address this question, students responded to two open-ended questions on Survey Monkey. These questions required the students to indicate the things they liked and disliked about recess. As a result, four themes emerged for both promoting and impeding belonging.

In terms of contextual factors that promote belonging at recess, students indicated that recess provides the opportunity to: 1) connect, 2) to participate in activities, 3) to be outside, and 4) to have a break. Refer to *Table 1,* which displays these four themes which emerged from the student's responses.

Table 8.

Student's Responses Regarding Factors that Promote Belonging at Recess.

Contextual Factors of Recess that Promote Belonging *What do you like about recess?*			
Recess Provides the Opportunity to Connect (n = 251)			
Playing Games and Activities with Friends n = 134	Socializing with Friends n = 147	Group Cohesion n = 13	
Recess Provides the Opportunity to Participate in Activities (n = 288)			
Being Active / Exercising n = 55	Playing Games n = 250		
Recess Provides the Opportunity to be Outside (n =64)			
Fresh Air n = 34	Good Weather n = 31		
Recess Provides the Opportunity to Have a Break (n = 66)			
Freedom n = 37	Break from Class n = 38		
Additional Responses (n = 32)			
Everything n = 19	No Response n = 5	Outlier n = 8	

Recess Provides the Opportunity to Connect. An important contextual factor of recess that promotes belongingness among students is the opportunity to connect with others. When asked what they liked about recess, 251 students (54%) indicated that they liked being with their friends. Specifically, 134 students indicated they liked playing various games and activities with their friends. For example, a boy in grade four stated he liked recess because "you play with your friends and get to run and play sports". This sentiment was echoed by many students as they indicated they liked recess because:

> "I like playing with friends" (Grade 5 Girl).
>
> "What I like about recess is that I get to spend time with my friends and play with them" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "I get to interact with my friends and play fun games with each other" (Grade 8 Girl).

In addition, 147 students stated they liked recess because they can socialize with their friend. For example a girl in grade 5 stated she likes recess “when me and my bestfriend just walk around and talk, when i see my friends in the other classes, when i can run around and talk as much and as loud as i want”. Others also stated:

> “so i can talk to my friends without getting (sic) in trouble” (Grade 5 Boy).
>
> “I get to hang out with my friend and talk to them because in class you can't or it disrupts other students” (Grade 8 Girl).
>
> “Social time with friends...Catch up with what's happened to your friends throughout the day” (Grade 8 Boy).

Finally, a smaller portion of students, 13 in total, mentioned they liked when group cohesion occurred during recess. For example a boy in grade 8 stated he liked “when we get along and can play a game with no fighting”. Similarly others mentioned:

> “I like my reses when we can agree on a game and we uselly (sic) have lots of FUN together thats what I like” (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> “The things that I like about recces is that when everybody even me, are involved in games and all the fun” (Grade 6 Girl).

As a result, being with friends at recess and specifically connecting with others is an important contextual factor that promotes children’s sense of belonging.

Recess Provides the Opportunity to Participate in Activities. In addition, students indicated that recess provides the opportunity to participate in activities with other student, thus promoting their sense of belonging. When asked what they liked about recess 288 students (62%), indicated that they liked participating in various activities. Specifically, 55 students indicated that they liked being active and contrasted this to this inactivity that takes place inside the classroom. For example students stated:

> “I like recess because its fun and we get to run around, inside you can't run around and you have to sit in one spot usually” (Grade 6 Girl).

> "You get to move around after being stuck at your desk for most of the day" (Grade 5 Boy).

> "I like getting exercise because I cant stay in the same spot for long and I love sports" (Grade 6 Boy).

> "I like recess because I get to run around" (Grade 4 Girl).

In addition, playing games was another subtheme that emerged amongst students. Specifically, 250 students stated they liked playing games at recess.

> "i like playing games" (Grade 4 Boy).

> "I like how you can play outside and playing game you can't play when it's an indoor recess like soccer and throwing a ball" (Grade 6 Girl).

> "The things I like about recess is playing soccer and football" (Grade 6 Boy).

> "football, soccer, basketball, volleyball (all sports)" (Grade 8 Girl).

Participating in various activities during recess allows students to interact with each other, and as a result also promoting a sense of belonging among students.

Recess Provides the Opportunity to be Outside. Furthermore, 64 students indicated that they liked recess because they were able to be outside. Specifically, 34 students mentioned that they liked recess because it gave them the opportunity to "get some fresh air". As a girl in grade 6 noted, "you get fresh air (the classrooms are kind of stuffy)". Furthermore, 31 students indicated they liked going outside, *when* the weather was nice and they were able to be active. It is important to note that data was collected during the winter, during periods of extremely cold temperatures. Students stated:

> "One of the things that I DO like about recess is in the summer you can just go outside, its warm, you can just run around and sit in the ground" (Grade 5 Girl).

> "Playing outside when it's warm out (Now THAT'S good weather)" (Grade 7 Boy).

> "When it snows when it is sunny and when we get to play" (Grade 5 Girl).

> "I like recess when it's warm out and when it's nice outside, because you can actually get active and run around and play active games with your friends" (Grade 8 Girl).

Recess Provides the Opportunity to Have a Break. Finally, 66 students indicated they liked recess because it provided them with a break from the classroom. Specifically, 37 students indicated recess was, as a boy in grade 7 stated: "FREEDOM!" Other students also indicated this as they said:

> "you have time to be free and get some fresh air and have fun!" (Grade 4 Boy).

> "I like that we get freedom and time off of our hard work." (Grade 6 Boy).

> "we get to go outside and just do whatever" (Grade 8 Boy).

In addition, 38 students stated they liked recess because it was a break from class work. For example, students stated:

> "It's kind of like a break from school" (Grade 6 Boy).

> "it is a break from learning" (Grade 8 Boy).

> "It's a nice break from being inside. You don't have to work, you can just hang out with your friends" (Grade 8 Girl).

As a result, the opportunity to have a break from class promotes belonging as students can choose to do what they want during their break.

In order to address the second part of the research question: *what contextual factors that impede belonging at recess*, students indicated what they disliked about recess. As a result it was found that recess was a place 1) of social conflict 2) that lacks activities, 3) that is COLD!, and 4) that needs restructuring. Refer to *Table 2*, which displays these four themes which emerged from the student's responses.

Table 9.

Students Responses Regarding Factors that Impede Belonging at Recess.

Contextual Factors of Recess that Impede Belonging *What do you dislike about recess?*			
Recess is a Place of Social Conflict (n = 206)			
Bullying n = 53	Exclusion / Being Alone n = 69	Fighting n = 46	Conflict n = 36
Getting Hurt n = 41	Mean / Rude People n = 21	Competition n = 3	Cheating n = 11
Recess is a Place that Lacks Activities (n = 74)			
Lack of Equipment n = 26	Bored / Nothing to Do n = 37		
Recess is a Place Where it's COLD! (n = 135)			
Cold Weather n = 135			
Recess is a Place that Needs Restructuring (n = 58)			
Crowded n = 10	Rules n = 35		
Additional Responses (n = 66)			
Nothing n = 29	No Response n = 29	Outlier n = 8	

Recess is a Place of Social Conflict. A significant contextual factor of recess that impedes belongingness among students is the amount of social conflict that occurs. When asked what they disliked about recess, 206 students (44%) indicated that they did not like the social conflict that was occurring. While there were many subthemes which emerged within social conflict, the three most prominent: bullying, exclusion / being alone, and fighting, will be addressed.

A total of 53 students specifically indicated they did not like the bullying that was either done to them, or that they had seen during recess. For example:

> "sometimes people bully you and tell things about you behind your back" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "I usually get bullied" (Grade 5 Girl).

> "[I don't like the] bully's around the playground, and hurting people physically and name calling" (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> "I dont like seeing kids being pushed around and being bullied" (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> "Kids are quite rude during recess and they will go around teasing innocent people who haven't done anything wrong and do not deserved to be teased. Some of the boys will get in your face and say mean things to you" (Grade 8 Girl).

In addition, 69 students stated that they did not like being alone or the exclusion that occurs during recess. For example, students stated:

> "sometimes you feel left out or your all alone and you have no one that wants to play with you" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "Some people won't let you play with them" (Grade 5 Girl).
>
> "When nobody wants to play with me. When nobody wants to talk to me" (Grade 5 Girl)
>
> "I don't like how certain kids are alone and they have no one to talk to. I always talk to the people who feel uncomfortable at recess time so they have a chance to enjoy recess as much as others do" (Grade 7 Girl).

Finally, 46 students indicated they did not like the fighting that occurs during recess. For example:

> "me and my friends fight sometimes, recess is a apparently a good time to fight" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "I dont like it when my friends start fighting and I have to waste my break triying to get them back together, Becase of a game that we cant agree on (sic)" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "Kids swear, push and shove, get into fist fights and verbal debates over games. they bully kids 3 to 5 years younger than them and hit them and shove them" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "some of the kids become mean to me and they some times push me and stuff like that" (Grade 6 Boy).

Recess is a Place that Lacks Activities. In addition, students indicated that recess lacks activities for students, resulting in nothing to do and boredom. Within the

broad theme of lack of activities, 74 students (16%) indicated that they disliked the lack of activity which occurred during recess. For example, as a grade 7 boy indicated, “not a lot to do on the playground. not a lot to do in general”.

More specifically, students indicated there was a lack of equipment available during recess which contributed to this problem, students mentioned:

> “you don't have much to play with” (Grade 4 Boy).
>
> “What I don’t like about recess is that we don’t get allot of equipment” (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> “everybody takes the balls and i don’t have any to play with people are rude” (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> “sometimes boring, not a lot of good sports equipment-soccer balls-basketballs-footballs” (Grade 8 Girl).

Due to the lack of activities and availability of equipment, 37 students indicated they were bored and had nothing to do. Consequently, this also impedes children’s sense of belonging as they are not connecting with others. Students indicated:

> “it is sometimes boring when there is nothing to do” (Grade 4 Boy).
>
> “Getting bored to often, always the same thing” (Grade 4 Boy).
>
> “Sometimes it's boring and their's nothing to do” (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> “Theres not a lot of things the older kids {intermediate} {Grade 7-8} can do other then stand around and talk. Although thats a lot of fun, sometimes it gets boring (Grade 7 Boy).

Recess is a Place that is COLD! Furthermore, students indicated that recess during the winter months is too cold, which impedes their ability to be active or socialize with friends. Specifically, 135 students (29%) indicated that they disliked the cold weather in the winter. For example, students stated:

> “in winter im really cold even in snowpants” (Grade 4 Girl).

> “somtimes its cold out and i am frozen” (Grade 5 Girl).
>
> “I don't like to be outside in the bitter cold” (Grade 6 Boy)
>
> “if it is cold we still have to go outside” (Grade 7 Boy).
>
> “Well, in the winter it gets really, really cold and you can't enjoy the outside when it's freezing cold out and you have to stay out there for 20 mins” (Grade 8 Girl).

From the student’s responses it is evident that during the winter months the recess environment may impede children’s sense of belonging as the cold temperatures reduces their opportunities to connect with others.

Recess is a Place that Needs Restructuring. Finally, 58 students (13%) also mentioned aspects of recess they did not like, which were related to the way recess is currently structured. Specifically, 10 students mentioned that recess is currently an over-crowed place which impedes their ability to do various activities. For example, students mentioned:

> “When it is too crowed and i'm not able to do what i want to do” (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> “the field is covered with kids most of the time and not alot of room to run around” (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> “it is very crouded… and [kids are kids so they] push on the way in” (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> “I don't like that we are outside with so many people because it gets too crowded and it limits what we can do” (Grade 8 Girl).

In addition, 35 students discussed some of the school rules put in place during recess, which limit what they are able to do. For example, students stated:

> “sometimes unable to play on the grass, not allowed to play certain sports or body contact [touching]” (Grade 4 Boy).
>
> “that we can’t play tag on the playground” (Grade 6 Boy).

> "having to follow rules with the big blowup balls because its like we have them but we cant do anything with them" (Grade 6 Girl).
>
> "that we can't really do stuff on the PLAY ground like run play tag games or climb" (Grade 7 Boy).
>
> "Each class has a day where they can only bring out there equipment and I think it should be each day where all classes should bring equipment" (Grade 8 Boy).

As a result of the current recess structure, many students indicated they were unhappy with certain aspects of recess

Consequently, there were several contextual factors which promoted and impeded children's sense of belonging at recess. Specifically, students indicated they enjoyed connecting with their friends at recess, but did not like all of the social conflict that also occurs. They also liked participating in various activities, but indicated that during recess there was often a lack of activities available, which resulted in boredom and nothing to do. Additionally, the students indicated they liked recess because it provided them with a chance to be outside and have a break from class, but indicated that during the winter months it is often too cold to do anything outside. These contextual factors will be further addressed with the discussion section of this thesis.

Tier Three: Support for Children at Recess

The second qualitative research question was: *What do students believe schools could do to support children at recess who feel as though they do not belong?* In order to address this question, students responded to the open-ended question "how do you think our school could help children who feel left out at recess?" As a result, three themes emerged from their responses. Students believed that in order to support children who feel left out at recess, schools need to 1) promote inclusion, 2) provide more activities,

and 3) implement supportive roles on the playground. Refer to *Table 3*, which displays these four themes which emerged from the student's responses.

Table 10.

Student's Responses Regarding Support for Children at Recess.

What do students think schools could do to support children at recess who feel as though they do not belong? *How do you think our school could help children who feel left out at recess?*			
Promote Inclusion (n = 174)			
n = 174			
Provide More Organized Activities and Clubs (n = 88)			
n = 88			
Implement Supportive Roles (n = 74)			
Teachers n = 23	Other Students n = 18	More Yard Duty Supervision n = 34	
Additional Responses (n = 127)			
I Don't Know n = 28	No Response n = 73	Outlier n = 26	

Promote Inclusion. In order to support children who feel left out at recess, 174 students (38%) stated they believed that schools need to promote inclusion amongst students. For example, a grade 5 girl stated, "look for people who feel left out and play with them". This notion was echoed by many students as they stated:

> "include them in games" (Grade 4 Boy).
>
> "Accept them even if you don't usually play with them because we are all human and nobody should feel left out because of what you look like or say or do" (Grade 5 Girl).
>
> "By making friends with them, or try and get them included in games" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "Just getting the message out there, that everyone is included in everything" (Grade 7 Girl).
>
> "simply include them by letting them join the activie" (Grade 8 Boy).

It was clear from the student's statements that in order to support left out children at recess, schools need to continue to promote inclusion amongst students.

Provide More Activities. Furthermore, 88 students (19%) suggested that schools could provide more activities for children at recess. As a grade six girl indicated: "Have activities set up so children who feel left out have something to do". Other students had similar ideas as they stated:

> "giveing us more actvedey and play games wiht us" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "have more games that we can play" (Grade 5 Boy).
>
> "have more organized games by adults" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "We could have activities for them so they cant get bullied" (Grade 7 Boy).
>
> "Create some activities for people who feel left out, but don't make it obvious that it's for them" (Grade 8 Girl).

It is evident from the student's responses that by providing more activities during recess, children who feel left out will have somewhere to go and something to play.

Implement Supportive Role. Additionally, 74 students (16%) suggested that schools could implement a supportive figure outside during recess to specifically help students who feel left out. Students either suggested someone could take on this position or specifically stated the supportive figure could be a teacher or other students. In this way, if a child felt left out they could go to this supportive figure for assistance negotiating the social landscape. Specifically, 23 students indicated teachers could support children at recess, as they explained:

> "Maybe have a teacher outside and the teacher will make sure that everyone is included in games and have children that like to include other[s] have them include everyone in games and make sure that the kids are feeling happy in the group of people that they are in" (Grade 5 Girl).

> "I think if teachers are outside they should send people that are lonely to be friends and play together" (Grade 5 Girl).
>
> "have teachers play with someone if there left out" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "i think our school could get some teachers that would help out if you were lonely" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "if a teacher sees someone left out they ask them what they want to do then help them join a group or something" (Grade 8 Girl).

Additionally, 18 students specifically suggested having other students outside at recess to look out and help children who feel left out. For example, students stated:

> "It would help to have older kids go around and help out" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "We could have kids walk around (who sign up) and make sure that everyone is being treated properly, if not we can play with them" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "Getting more older students to play with them" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "Have a program where different people (kids) walk around and watch out for bullies" (Grade 6 Girl).

Finally, students also suggested that overall more supervision would be helpful outside during recess. In this way, more yard duty supervisors could help intervene during times of social conflict and help children who are left out. Specifically, 34 students indicated more supervision was needed at outside recess. For example, students stated:

> "put more supervision" (Grade 4 Girl).
>
> "more teachers on yard duty" (Grade 5 Boy).
>
> "maybe we could get more teachers on yard duty so if one kid was left out the teacher could try and get them something to do" (Grade 6 Boy).
>
> "more supervisors around kids" (Grade 7 Boy).
>
> "have more teachers out to see what's happening" (Grade 8 Girl).

Consequently, the students felt that if more supervision was present during recess, there would less social conflict amongst students. Overall, several students believed it was important to have more supportive figure outside at recess responsible for helping children who feel left out.

Additional Responses. It is important to note that there were 127 additional responses that did not fit into the above mentioned themes. 73 students did not provide a response with an added 28 students indicating "I don't know". Finally, there were 26 students who were categorized as outliers as their responses did not fit into any category. Interestingly, when asked how the school could support children who feel left out, 5 students within the outlier category indicated the blame should be placed on the child. For example, a grade four girl said, in order to support left out children: "DON'T always tell on people" and a grade four boy stated, "by teaching them not to bother people". It can be hypothesized that these students may provide less support for children who feel left out.

As students spend a considerable amount of time at recess during their school day, it is important to take their suggestions into consideration. Thus, in order to support children who feel left out at recess, students suggested that schools need to promote inclusion amongst their student, provide more organized activities, and implement supportive figures outside during recess. These suggestions will be further discussed within tier 3 of the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine peer victimization at recess, explore how victimization relates to children's sense of belonging, identify what factors promote and impede belongingness and determine what supports could be provided for children at recess. To address these components a mixed-methods approach was utilized, as both the quantitative and qualitative survey responses from the participants were included. The following discussion will address the results from the six research questions formulated for this thesis, which are organized around the three tiers guiding this work (the scope of victimization at recess, victimization and belonging at recess, and support for children at recess). Accordingly, the following section will discuss relevant findings, implications for policy and practice, limitations of this study and future research.

Tier One: The Scope of Victimization at Recess

In order to gain a broad overview of how often each form of victimization is experienced at recess, students responded on a five point scale the frequency at which they experienced each form of victimization (verbal, physical, social). Consequently, the results indicated that physical victimization occurs most often, as 29.1% of students in grades four to eight reported this occurred either "sometimes", "most of the time" or "all of the time". This is consistent with previous literature, as physical aggression is known to be more prevalent in childhood, and decreases with age into adolescence (Brame, Nagin, & Tremblay, 2001; Côté, Vailliancourt, LeBlanc, Nagin & Tremblay, 2006; Juvonen, & Graham, 2014). For example, a study by Brame and colleagues (2001) examined the developmental trajectories of physical aggression from school entry into late adolescence. Utilizing teacher reports of physical aggression in childhood and self-

reports of physical aggression in adolescence, results conclusively found that physical aggression decreased substantially over time. Similarly, Côté and colleagues (2006) examined the development of physical aggression from toddlerhood to pre-adolescence. Results from this study also indicated that physical aggression decreases over time, with the majority of children learning to inhibit physical aggression by the end of childhood. Overall, physical victimization is found to be more prevalent in elementary school age children than in adolescence. According to Juvonen and Grahman (2014) physical victimization is more prominent in elementary school as physical aggression requires less sophisticated social skill in comparison to indirect forms of aggression. Furthermore, once individuals reach adolescence it is less socially acceptable to be physically aggressive with peers (Archer & Coyne, 2005).

Verbal victimization was reported next, with 23.9% of students indicating this occurred to them either "sometimes", "most of the time" or "all of the time". Overt forms of victimization, such as name-calling or teasing, are also common among elementary school aged children. While physical victimization is found to decrease over time, research indicates that rates of verbal victimization continue to increase over time, reaching a peak in grade 9 (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006).

Finally, social victimization was reported least frequently (but notably similar to verbal victimization) as 23.0% of students indicated this occurred either "sometimes", "most of the time" or "all of the time". It is not surprising that social victimization occurred least often within the elementary school setting, as this form of victimization is reported more often during adolescence. According to Archer and Coyne (2005) young children typically rely more on overt tactics, such as physical and verbal aggression, as

this is more in line with their cognitive maturity. However, as physical victimization begins to decline, it is often replaced with verbal and social victimization (Scheithauer et al., 2006). One explanation for why social victimization in particular increases during adolescence is due to the fact that social status within a group becomes much more important during this time period (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010). Overall, the frequencies of each form of victimization reported were consistent with research, as children in elementary experience more overt forms of victimization rather than covert (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Juvonen & Grahman, 2014).

To gain a more detailed perspective of victimization at recess, it was important to determine how the form and frequency of victimization varied by sex and developmental level. By computing three independent samples t-tests, results demonstrated significant differences between boys and girls and developmental levels on the frequencies and forms of victimization experienced at recess.

Sex Differences in Victimization. First, boys in grades four to eight reported higher levels of physical victimization in comparison to girls. This is consistent with research, as it has been repeatedly found that boys experience more physical victimization than girls (Lagerspertz, Björkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Maynard & Joseph, 2000; Olweus, 1993; Whitney & Smith, 1993). In addition, it has also been found that boys employ more direct forms of bullying, specifically physical aggression, in comparison to girls (Craig, 1998; Juvonen & Graham, 2014).

Furthermore, girls in grades four to eight reported higher levels of social victimization in comparison to boys. This is also consistent with research (Lagerspertz et al., 1998) as sex differences in social victimization are often nonexistent amongst young children, but

begin to develop around age 8 to 11 and then reach their peak during adolescence (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Finally, consistent with victimization research, there were no significant differences between boys and girls on their level of verbal victimization experienced (Maynard & Joseph, 2000; Olweus, 1993).

Developmental Differences in Victimization. When comparing students in grades four, five, and six (developmental level 1) to students in grades seven and eight (developmental level 2), significant differences were evident. Specifically, students in developmental level 1 reported significantly more social victimization and overall victimization. At first glance, these result may seem inconsistent with research, as it is known that bullying tends to peak in early adolescence (Juvonen & Grahman, 2014; Pepler et al., 2006). However, research indicates that both aggression and victimization tend to decrease during the last two years of elementary school, and then increase once students make the transition to middle or high school, as this is a time of social uncertainty (Pellegrini & Long, 2002; Salmivalli, 2002; Williford, Brisson, Bender, Jenson, & Forrest-Bank, 2011). Therefore, it can be suggested that bullying and victimization decrease during the last two years of elementary school because a social hierarchy is currently in place, creating social certainty amongst the students. Consequently, the result that students in grades seven and eight reported less social and overall victimization than students in grades four, five, and six, is consistent with current literature.

Differences in Victimization across Sex and Developmental Level. Next, when comparing boys across developmental level in regards to the amount of victimization experienced, no significant differences were found for any of the forms of victimization

addressed (verbal, physical, social, composite). These results are interesting, as they do not support the finding that students in grades four, five, and six, experience more peer victimization. Therefore, it may solely be that girls in grades four, five, and six experience more victimization, while boys experience the same amount across grades.

Conversely, when comparing girls across developmental level, several significant differences were identified regarding the frequency of victimization reported for each form. Specifically, girls in grade four, five, and six experienced more physical, social, and overall victimization in comparison to girls in grade seven and eight. No significant differences were found amongst girls in regards to verbal victimization. These findings are consistent with the previous results found within the developmental differences in victimization section, as well as previous research (Pellegrini & Long, 2002; Salmivalli, 2002; Williford et al., 2011). Girls in particular may experience less victimization in grades 7 and 8 due to the social hierarchy put in place which creates social certainty.

Tier Two: Victimization and Belonging at Recess

After exploring the scope of victimization at recess, the next set of research questions looked to examine the relationship between victimization and belonging. In order to do so, Pearson r correlations were first computed. Consequently, moderate to strong relationships were found between belongingness and each form of victimization (physical, verbal, social, and the composite victimization score). It is important to note that because this statistical procedure utilized Pearson r, it is not possible to determine causation. Specifically, it is unknown whether low belongingness is a result of high victimization or, if high victimization is a result of low belongingness.

However, research on the need to belong theory indicates that when individuals experience social rejection they often experience a host of negative responses. For example, Baumeister and Leary (1995) indicate that feeling rejected, excluded, or ignored is associated with strong negative feelings, including: anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy, and loneliness. Furthermore, research indicates that children who experience peer rejection are placed at an increased risk for peer victimization (Buhs et al., 2006; Serdiouk, Rodkin, Madill, Logis, & Gest, 2015). Thus it is suggested that children who experience peer victimization may have a reduced sense of belonging as a result.

Therefore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between belongingness and victimization, a two-step linear regression analysis was conducted. After controlling for sex and developmental level, results indicated that verbal and social victimization were significant predictors of belongingness, whereas physical victimization was not. It is suggested that verbal and social victimization had a greater impact on belongingness as the nature of these forms of victimization are closely related with reduced feelings of belongingness. For example, students reported how often they experienced verbal victimization by responding to the question: "*during recess, I have been teased (made fun of) because of what I believe, look like, or say".* It is suggested that being teased by peers based on an individual's differences creates a greater likelihood of reduced feelings of belonging. Similarly, students reported how often they experienced social victimization by responding to the question: *"during recess, it seems like others ignore and exclude me on purpose".* Feeling ignored and excluded from others may also relate to reduced feelings of belonging, as it is similar to feeling rejected from a peer group. In contrast, students who experience physical victimization, by

indicating: "*I have been hit, kicked, or pushed by others on purpose during recess"* may not experience a reduced sense of belonging. It is suggested that physical victimization does not impact an individual's sense of belonging the same way that verbal and social victimization do. These findings are supported by O'Brennan and Furlong (2010) who examined school connectedness and peer victimization. Their research found that the type of peer victimization experienced has different effects on student's school connectedness. Specifically, students who experienced verbal victimization reported lower levels of connectedness in comparison to students who experienced physical victimization. As a result, O'Brennan and Furlong (2010) suggest that direct verbal victimization is most strongly associated with feelings of disconnectedness. Consequently, from these findings, it is possible to suggest that higher levels of verbal and social victimization predict lower levels of belongingness.

Contextual Factors that Promote and Impede Belongingness at Recess

Once the relationship between victimization and belongingness was further examined, qualitative data was utilized to determine potential contextual factors of recess that promote and impede children's sense of belonging. The following section will address the contextual factors that the students addressed within their open-ended responses.

Connecting vs. Social Conflict. Students repeatedly mentioned they enjoyed recess as it provided them with a context to connect with their friends. However, they also stated that they did not like the social conflict that was present during recess. Consistent with previous research, the school playground is the main location where children are most likely to be victimized (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig et al. 2000;

Vaillancourt et al., 2010). This is often resulting from the unique aspects of the recess context, including the unstructured nature of recess as well as the lack of supervision, which will be addressed further within tier 3. Due to the negative implications children experience as a result social conflict, it is suggested that children who experience various forms of social conflict also experience a reduced sense of belonging. Therefore, it is vital that an emphasis is placed on reducing the negative social conflict that occurs during recess in order to enhance student's sense of belonging.

Activities vs. Lack of Activities. Additionally, students mentioned they liked participating in various activities during recess, such as playing different games and sports. By participating in various activities with other children, it can be argued that one feels a greater sense of belonging. Research done by Walton, Cohen, Cwir and Spencer (2012) found that by participating in a group activity together, individuals felt a greater sense of belonging to the group. However, during recess there is often a lack of activities available for students, which as result leaves students with nothing to do and boredom. Consequently, with no activities to engage in with other students, this could also contribute to a reduced sense of belonging amongst students.

Good Weather vs. Bad Weather. Within the Canadian education system, weather plays an important role in determining student's accessibility to various activities during recess. Students consistently mentioned they enjoyed being outside at recess when the weather was nice out and they were able to participate in different games. As explained by a grade eight girl: "I like recess when it's warm out and when it's nice outside, because you can actually get active and run around and play active games with your friends". Being outside in warm weather allows students to connect with their peers

through participating in various activities. However, during the winter months when the weather can reach extremely cold temperatures, students indicated that they did not like going outside. As another grade eight girl stated: “Well, in the winter it gets really, really cold and you can't enjoy the outside when it's freezing cold out and you have to stay out there for 20 mins”. As a result of extremely cold temperatures students are not able to enjoy being outside for recess, which consequently also impacts their ability to connect with their peers. Overall, it appears that connecting, activities, and good weather all promote a sense of belonging among students, whereas social conflict, lack of activities, and bad weather impede one’s sense of belonging.

Tier Three: Support for Children at Recess

The final research question addressed what students believed schools could do to support children at recess who feel as though they do not belong. This question was answered utilizing one open-ended question on the survey asking students to indicate, “*how do you think your school could help children who feel left out at recess?”* Consequently, from the student’s responses, three themes emerged as possible solutions to support children at recess who feel left out, these solutions included: 1) promote inclusion amongst students, 2) provide more activities, and 3) implement supportive figures. These three solutions will be discussed within the following section.

Promote Inclusion. First, students suggested that schools need to promote inclusion in order to ensure there are no children at recess who feel left out. Students continuously stated: “include them in games” (Grade 4 Boy), and “simply include them by letting them join the activie (sic)” (Grade 8 Boy). While many students know it is important to include others, this sentiment is not always translated onto the playground.

For example, 69 students within this study indicated that exclusion often occurs during recess. Therefore, while inclusion seems like a great solution to support students who feel left out, it is important to question how schools could promote inclusion in their schools. Research suggests that some schools are utilizing peer mediation as a strategy for social inclusion at school. For example, a study by Noaks and Noaks (2009) examined peer mediation among nine schools in the UK and found that over six years there were significantly lower rates of bullying and an overall more positive school climate.

Provide More Activities. In addition, students suggested that in order to help children who feel left out, schools need to provide more organized activities and clubs during recess. By providing more organized activities, students believed that children would consequently have more opportunities to engage in an activity with other students. As previously mentioned, the current recess environment in Southern Ontario often lacks play equipment and activities (McNamara, 2013). Without activities to participate in during recess, many students have indicated they are often bored with nothing to do. Research indicates that boredom at recess often leads to maladaptive patterns of behaviour for children, including peer victimization and social exclusion (McNamara, 2013).

Research done by Fite and colleagues (2013) examined the locations of victimization for children in elementary school and in line with other studies, also found that the playground was the most common place children reported victimization. This research suggested that in order to reduce victimization at recess it would be beneficial to provide more structure for students, including organized games and activities to choose from. While unstructured environments are important for children (Barros et al., 2009),

the unstructured environment of recess is associated with increased rates of bullying (Swearer et al., 2010). Therefore, as recommended by McNamara (2013) it would be beneficial for school recess to adopt a continuum of activities for students to participate in, ranging from structured to unstructured.

Implement Supportive Role. Finally, students suggested that schools could implement supportive figures outside at recess for students to turn to in times of need. It was suggested these supportive figures could be teachers or other students, such as peer mediators, who could lend an extra set of eyes on the playground and provide assistance for those feeling left out. By examining the student's responses it was clear that overall students felt more supervision is needed outside at recess. This suggestion is consistent with previous research which has indicated that peer victimization is most likely to take place in areas where the ratio of students to teachers is high and where adults are limited in their ability to monitor and provide supervision (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000).

Research done by Vaillancourt and colleagues (2010) also found that the school yard and playground were hot spot locations for bullying and victimization at school. Along with suggesting more supervision at recess, Vaillancourt et al. (2010) also recommended implementing peer mediators on the playground in locations where children often report victimization. Research indicates that student-mediated conflict resolution programs are an effective strategy to reduce aggressive behaviour on the playground (Cunningham et al., 1998). For example, a study done by Cunningham and colleagues (1998) trained grade 5 students to be peer mediators on the playground for primary school students. The results indicated that the peer mediators effectively intervened and resolved 90% of the conflicts which arose on the playground. Similarly,

Fite and colleagues (2013) stated schools need to strategically place more supervision on the playground in areas where victimization is often reported in order to reduce peer victimization. Overall, it is clear that a critical first step to reducing peer victimization at recess would be to provide more supervision as well as support from teachers and other students.

Implications and Future Directions

Research indicates that within the school setting peer victimization occurs most often at recess (Fite et al., 2013; Olweus, 1993;Vaillancourt et al., 2010), yet there is very little research which examines the recess context. The findings from this thesis have shed light on the importance of continued research in this area, as it is evident that the recess context plays a significant role in children's experiences with peer victimization. Furthermore, by conducting correlation and regression analyses, this thesis has highlighted the relationships between peer victimization and children's sense of belonging. These results suggest that students who experience frequent peer victimization consequently have a reduced sense of belonging. It will be important for future studies to also examine this relationship in order to add validity to these findings.

Due to the unique context of recess, this thesis provides several recommendations for educators and school administrators to utilize in order to support children at recess who may feel left out. First, it is recommended that schools provide more organized activities and clubs for children at recess. In this way, students have the option to be engaged in various activities and subsequently are not left alone with no one to play with. In addition, it is recommended that schools provide more supportive figures outside at recess for students to turn to in times of need. These supportive figures could be a teacher

or student, such as a peer mediator. By implementing peer mediators at recess it may be possible to promote more social inclusion amongst students and reduce levels of peer-victimization. Overall, student's felt more supervision is needed at recess.

While recess is currently an overlooked portion of the school day, this thesis provided undeniably evidence on the need to focus attention on the recess context in order to reduce rates of victimization and enhance student's overall sense of belonging. Based on the prevalence rates of victimization at recess, particular attention and support may be necessary for students in grades four, five, and six, as they indicated higher rates of victimization in comparison to students in grades seven and eight. Overall, the findings from this thesis are important for school educators and administrator as peer victimization continues to be a serious issue for children at school.

Limitations

While this research has several implications for research and practice, there are limitations from this study which must be addressed. First, in regards to the victimization measure, only one item was used to access each form of physical, verbal, and social victimization. While the internal reliability of victimization collectively was reported at .72, each form of victimization alone was not. In order to build upon this research, it would be beneficial for future research to include more items for each form of victimization on the survey to provide internal reliability for each form of victimization.

Second, in terms of methodology, self-report methods were used by the students to determine victimization and belongingness levels. As a result, levels of victimization and belongingness are based on the student's perceptions solely. It is possible that some of the participants over or underestimated the amount of verbal, physical, and social

victimization they actually experience. However, self-report methods are the preferred choice among bullying researchers (Espelage & Swearer, 2003) and are also valid and reliable (Sekol & Farrington, 2013). Nevertheless, it may be beneficial for future research to also rely on observational methods to complement the victimization scores as well as reports from teachers on their student's level of victimization.

A third limitation of the current study was the use of multiple tests to analyze the data. Specifically, three independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare students on their level of victimization by individually analyzing sex differences, developmental differences, and then developmental differences within each sex. It is possible that by conducting multiple tests the results were inflated, as the chance of having a type one error rate increased. As such, the results addressing the scope of victimization at recess should be interpreted with caution. Future research might conduct a MANOVA in order to determine the differences between each group compared.

Finally, caution must be exercised when examining the results which compared students from developmental level one and two. There were 355 students in developmental level (grades 4, 5, and 6) which comprised of 72.2% of the sample, with only 129 students in developmental level two (27.8%). While this study has a large sample size, it would be beneficial for future studies to aim for a relatively equal number of participants within each grade for comparison purposes.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, my thesis provided insight into peer victimization and belonging within the recess context. Specifically, my thesis displayed the amount of peer victimization that occurs at recess, demonstrated how victimization relates to children's

sense of belonging, identified what contextual factors promote and impede belongingness, and determined what supports could be provided for children at recess. Resulting from the fact that information pertaining to the context of recess is largely absent from the research literature, this thesis provides important information for educators and school administrators on issues surrounding recess. Moving forward more emphasis must be placed on the recess environment in order to reduce experiences of peer-victimization amongst students.

References

Adler, A. (1930). *The education of children*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Archer, J. & Coyne, S. (2005). An integrated review of indirect, relational, and social aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 9*(3), 212-230. doi: 10.1207/s15327957pspr0903_2

Asher, S. R. & Wheeler, V. A. (1985). Children's loneliness: A comparison of rejected and neglected peer status. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 53*(4), 500-505.

Barros, R. M., Silver, E. J., & Stein, R. E. K. (2009). School recess and group classroom behaviour. *Pediatrics, 123*(2), 431-436. doi: 10.1542/peds.2007-2825

Baumeister R. F. & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin 117*(3), 497-529.

Brame, B., Nagin, D. S., & Tremblay, R. E. (2001). Developmental trajectories of physical aggression from school entry to late adolescence. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 42*(4), 503-512.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Towards an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32*(7), 513-531.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Brown, R. (1999). The influence of extracurricular activity participation upon youth problem behavior: School connection as a mediator. (Doctoral Dissertation). University of California, Davis.

Brown, R. & Evans, W. P. (2002). Extracurricular activity and ethnicity: Creating greater school connection among diverse student populations. *Urban Education,* 37(1), 41-58.

Buhs, E. S., Ladd, G. W., & Herald, S. L. (2006). Peer exclusion and victimization: Processes that mediate the relation between peer group rejection and children's classroom engagement and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*(1), 1-13. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.1

Burk, L. R., Armstrong, J. M., Park, J-H., Zahn-Waxler, C., Klein, M. H., Essex, M. J. (2010). Stability of early identified aggressive victim status in elementary school and associations with later mental health problems and functional impairments. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 39,* 225-238. doi: 10.1007/s10802-010-9454-6

Card, N. A. & Little, T. D. (2006). Proactive and reactive aggression in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analysis of differential relations with psychosocial adjustment. *International Journal of Behavioural Development, 30*(5), 466-480. doi: 10.1177/0165025406071904

Carrera, M. V., DePalma, R., & Lameiras, M. (2011). Towards a more complex understanding of bullying in school settings. *Educational Psychology Review, 23,* 479-499. doi: 10.1007/s10648-011-9171-x

Cemalcilar, Z. (2010). Schools as socialization contexts: Understanding the impact of school climate factors on students' sense of school belonging. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 59*(2), 243-272. doi: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.2009.00389.x

Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record, 111*(1), 180-213.

Côté, S., Vaillancourt, T., LeBlanc, J. C., Nagin, D. S., & Tremblay, R. E. (2006). The development of physical aggression from toddlerhood to pre-adolescence: A nationwide longitudinal study of Canadian children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 34*(1), 68-82. doi: 10.1007/s10802-005-9001-z

Craig, W. M. (1998). The relationship among bullying, victimization, depression, anxiety, and aggression in elementary school children. *Personality and Individual Differences, 24*(1), 123-130.

Craig, W. M. & Pepler, D. J. (1997). Observations of bullying and victimization in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 13,* 41-59.

Craig, W. M., Pepler, D., & Atlas, R. (2000). Observations of bullying in the playground and in the classroom. *School Psychology International,21*(1), 22-36.

Craig, W., Pepler, D., & Blais, J. (2007). Responding to bullying: What works? *School Psychology International, 28*(4), 465-477. doi: 10.1177/0143034307084136

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches, third edition*. Sage Publications: Lincoln

Cunningham, C. E., & Cunningham, L. J., & Martorelli, V., Tran, A., Young, J. & Zacharias, R. (1998). The effect of primary division, student-mediated conflict resolution programs on playground aggression. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 39*(5), 653-622.

DeWall, C. N. & Bushman, B. J. (2011). Social acceptance and rejection: The sweet and the bitter. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20*(4), 256-260. doi: 10.1177/0963721411417545

Doll, B., Murphy, P. & Song, S. Y. (2003). The relationship between children's self-reported recess problems, and peer acceptance and friendships. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*, 113-130. doi: 10.1016/S0022-4405(03)00029-3

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405-432.

Engle, J. M., McElwain, N. L., Lasky, N. (2011). Presence and quality of kindergarten children's friendships: Concurrent and longitudinal associations with child adjustment in the early school years. *Infant and Child Development, 20*, 365-386. doi: 10.1002/icd.706

Espelage, D. L. & Swearer, S. M. (2003). Research on school bullying and victimization: What have we learned and where do we go from here? *School Psychology Review, 32*(2), 365-383.

Fite, P. J., Colder, C. R.., Lochman, J. E., & Wells, K. C. (2008). Developmental trajectories of proactive and reactive aggression from fifth to ninth grade. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 37*(2), 412-421. doi: 10.1080/15374410801955920

Fite, P. J., Williford, A., Cooley, J. L., DePaolis, K., Rubens, S. L., & Vernnerg, E. M. (2013) Patterns of victimization location in elementary school children: Effects of grade level and gender. *Journal of Child Youth Care Forum, 42*, 585-597. doi: 10.1007/s10566-013-9219-9

Gere, J. & MacDoanld, G. (2010). An update of the empirical case for the need to belong. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 66,* 93-115.

Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark V. L., Petska, K. S., & Creswell, J. D. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 224-235. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.224

Hawker, D. S. J. & Boulton, M. J. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 41*(4), 441-455.

Hawker, D., & Boulton, M. (2001). Subtypes of peer harassment and their correlates. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.), *Peer harassment in school: The plight of the vulnerable and the victimized* (pp. 378–397). New York: Guilford Press.

Hawkins, D. L., Pepler, D. J., & Craig, W. M. (2001). Naturalistic observations of peer interventions in bullying. *Social Development, 10*(4), 512-527.

Hawley, P. H. (1999). The ontogenesis of social dominance: A strategy-based evolutionary perspective. *Developmental Review, 19*, 97-132.

Holmes, R. M., Pellegrini, A. D. & Schmidt, S. L. (2006). The effects of recess timing regimens on preschoolers' classroom attention. *Early Child Development and Care, 176*(7), 735-743. doi: 10.1080/03004430500207179

Juvonen, J. & Graham, S. (2014). Bullying in schools: The power of bullies and the plight of victims. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65,* 159-185. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030

Kendrick, K., Jutengren, G., & Stattin, H. (2012). The protective role of supportive friends against bullying perpetration and victimization. *Journal of Adolescence, 35,* 1069-1080. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.02.014

LaFontana, K. M. & Cillessen, A. H. N. (2010). Developmental changes in the priority of perceived status in childhood and adolescence. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00522.x

Lagerspetz, K. M., Björkqvist, K., & Peltonen, T. (1988). Is indirect aggression typical of females? Gender differences in aggressiveness in 11- to 12-year old children.

Little, T. D., Brauner, J., Jones, S. M., Nock, M. K. & Hawley, P. H. (2003). Rethinking aggression: A typological examination of the functions of aggression. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly,49*(3), 343-369.

Leary, M. R. & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). The nature and function of self-esteem: Sociometer theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, 32,* 1-62. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Leary, M. R., Kelly, K. M., Cottrell, C. A., & Schreindorfer, L. S. (2013). Construct validity and the need to belong scale: Mapping the nomological network. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 95*(6), 610-624. doi: 10.1080/00223891.2013.819511

Leary, M. R., Twenge, J. M., & Quinlivan, E. (2006). Interpersonal rejection as determinant of anger and aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10*(2), 111-132.

Marini, Z. A., Dane, A. V., Kennedy, R. E. (2010). Multiple pathways to bullying: Tailoring educational practices to variations in students' temperament and brain function. In M. Ferrari & L. Vulatics (Eds.), *The developmental relations among mind, brain, and education*: *Essays in honor of robbie case* (pp. 257-291). New York: Springer.

Maynard, H. & Joseph, S. (2000). Development of the multidimensional peer-victimization scale. *Journal of Aggressive Behaviour, 26,* 169-178.

McNamara, L. (2013). What's getting in the way of play? An analysis of the contextual factors that hinder recess in elementary schools. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research, 14*(2), 3-21.

McNamara, L., Vaantaja, E., Dunseith, A., & Franklin, N. (2014). Tales from the playground: Transforming the context of recess through collaborative action research. *International Journal of Play*.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd edition). New York: Harper & Row.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook, third edition.* Sage Publications: Arizona.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviours among US youth: Prevalence and associations with psychosocial adjustment. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*, 2094-2100.

Neal, J. W. & Neal, Z. P. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directions for ecological systems theory. *Social Development, 22*(4), 395-422. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01612.x

Noaks, J. & Noaks, L. (2009). School-based peer mediation as a strategy for social inclusion. *Pastoral Care in Education, 27*(1), 53-61. doi: 10.1080/02643940902731880

Nickerson, A. B., Singleton, D., Schnurr, B., Collen, M. H. (2014). Perceptions of school climate as a function of bullying involvement. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 30,* 157- 181. doi: 10.1080/15377903.2014.888530

O'Brennan, L. M. & Furlong, M. J. (2010). Relations between students' perceptions of school connectedness and peer victimization. *Journal of School Violence,9,* 375-391. doi: 10.1080/15388220.2010.509009

O'Connell, P., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (1999). Peer involvement in bullying: Insights and challenges for intervention. *Journal of Adolescence, 22*, 437-452.

Olthof, T. & Goossens, F. A. (2007). Bullying and the need to belong: Early adolescents' bullying-related behaviour and the acceptance they desire and receive from particular classmates. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00413.x

Olweus, D. (1993). Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Olweus, D. (2001). Peer harassment: A critical analysis and some important issues. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.). *Peer harassment in schools: The plight of the vulnerable and the victimized*. New York: Guliford Press.

Olweus, D. (2013). School bullying: Development and some important challenges. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 9*, 751-780. doi: 10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050212-185516

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *Class-size Tracker.* Retrieved from: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/cst/provinceResults.html

Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), 323-367

Pellegrini, A. D. (2005). *Recess: Its role in education.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Pellegrini, A. D. & Bjorklund, D. F. (1997). The role of recess in children's cognitive performance. *Educational Psychologist, 32*(1), 35-40. doi: 10.1207/s15326985ep3201_3

Pellegrini, A. D. & Bohn, C. M. (2005). The role of recess in children's cognitive performance and school adjustment. *Educational Researcher, 34*(1), 13-19. doi: 10.3102/0013189X034001013

Pellegrini, A. D. & Long, J. D. (2002). A longitudinal study of bullying, dominance, and victimization during the transition from primary school through secondary school. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 20,* 259-280.

Pepler, D. J., Craig, W. M., Connolly, J. A., Yuile, A., McMaster, L., & Jiang, D. (2006). A developmental perspective on bullying. *Aggressive Behaviour, 32*, 376-384.

Pieschl, S., Porsch, T., Kahl, T., & Klockenbusch, R. (2013). Relevant dimensions of cyberbullying – results from two experimental studies. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 34*(5), 241-252. doi: 10.1016/j.appdev.2013.04.002

Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., & Salmivalli, C. (2012). Standing up for the victim, siding with bully or standing by? Bystander responses in bullying situations. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2012.0062.x

Ramsetter, C., Murray, R., & Garner, A. S. (2010). The crucial role of recess in schools. *Journal of School Health, 80*(11), 517-525.

Ridgers, N. D., Salmon, J., Parrish, A., Stanley, R. M., & Okely, A. D. (2012). Physical activity during school recess: A systematic review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 43*(3), 320-328.

Salmivalli, C. (2010). Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Journal of Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 15*, 112-120. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2009.08.007

Salmivalli, C. (2002). Is there an age decline in victimization by peers at school? *Educational Research, 44*(3), 269-277.

Salmivalli, C. & Nieminen, E. (2002). Proactive and reactive aggression among school bullies, victims, and bully victims. *Aggressive Behaviour, 28*, 30-44. doi: 10.1002/ab.90004

Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Björkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process: Participant roles and their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behaviour, 22*, 1-15.

Salmivalli, C. & Voeten, M. (2004). Connections between attitudes, group norms, and behaviour in bullying situations. *International Journal of Behavioural Development, 28*, 246-258. doi: 10.1080/01650250344000488

Scheithauer, H., Hayer, T., Petermann, F., & Jugert, G. (2006). Physical, verbal, and relational forms of bullying among german students: Age trends, gender differences, and correlates. *Journal of Aggressive Behaviour, 32,* 261-275. doi: 10.1002/ab.20128

Schwartz, D. (2000). Subtypes of victims and aggressors in children's peer groups. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 28*(2), 181-192.

Schwartz, D., Gorman, A. H., Nakamoto, J. & Toblin, R. L. (1997). Victimization in the peer group and children's academic functioning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*(3), 425-435.

Serdiouk, M., Rodkin, P., Madill, R., Logis, H., & Gest, S. (2015). Rejection and victimization among elementary school children: The buffering role of classroom-level predictors. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 43*, 5-17. doi: 10.1007/s10802-013-9826-9

Sekol, I. & Farrington, D. P. (2013). The reliability and validity of self, peer, and staff reports of bullying and victimisation in correctional and care institutions. *Psychology, Crime, & Law, 19*(4), 329-344. doi: 10.1080/1068316X.2011.631541

Smith, H., Polenik, K., Nakasita, S., & Jones, A. P. (2012). Profiling social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of children involved in direct and indirect bullying behaviours. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 17,* 243-257.

Solberg, M. E., Olweus, D., & Endresen, I. M. (2007). Bullies and victims at school: Are they the same pupils? *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77,* 441-464. doi: 10.1348/000709906X105689

Swearer, S. M. & Doll, B. (2001). Bullying in schools: An ecological framework. *Journal of Emotional Abuse, 2*(2), 7-23. doi: 10.1300/J135v02n02_02

Swearer, S. M., Espelage, D. L., Vaillancourt, T. & Hymel, S. (2010). What can be done about school bullying? Linking research to educational practice. *Educational Research, 39*(1), 38-47, doi: 10.3102/0013189X09357622

Thomson, S. (2007). Do's and don'ts: Children's experiences of the primary school playground. *Environmental Education Research, 13*(4), 487-500. doi: 10.1080/13504620701581588

Vailancourt, T., Brittain, H., Bennett, L., Arnocky, S., McDougall, P., Hymel, S., Short, K., Sunderani, S., Scott, C., Mackenzie, M., & Cunningham, L. (2010). Places to avoid: Population-based study of student reports of unsafe and high bullying areas at school. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, *25*(1), 40-54. doi: 10.1177/0829573509358686

Vaillancourt, T., Brittain, H. L., McDougall, P., & Duku, E. (2013). Longitudinal links between childhood peer victimization, internalizing and externalizing problems, and academic functioning: Developmental cascades. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 41*, 1203-1215. doi: 10.1007/s10802-013-9781-5

Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S., & McDougall, P. (2013). The biological underpinnings of peer victimization: Understanding why and how the effects of bullying can last a lifetime. *Theory Into Practice, 52*, 241-248. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2013.829726

Vaillancourt, T., McDougall, P., Hymel, S., Krygsman, A., Miller, J., Stiver, K., & Davis, C. (2008). Bullying: Are researchers and children/youth talking about the same thing? *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 32*(6), 486-495. doi: 10.1177/0165025408095553

Verstraete, S. J., Cardon, G. M., De Clercq, D. L. R., & De Bourdeaudhuji, I. M. M. (2006). Increasing children's physical activity levels during recess periods in elementary schools: The effects of providing game equipment. *European Journal of Public Health, 16*(4), 415-419. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckl008

Volk, A. A., Camilleri, J. A., Dane, A. V., & Marini, Z. A. (2012). Is adolescent bullying an evolutionary adaption? *Journal of Aggressive Behaviour, 38, 222-238.*

Volk, A., Craig, W., Boyce, W., King, M. (2006). Adolescent risk correlates of bullying and different types of victimization. *International Journal of Adolescent Medical Health, 18*(4), 575-386.

Volk, A. A., Dane, A. V., & Marini, Z. A. (2014).What is bullying? A theoretical redefinition. *Developmental Review* (in press). doi:10.1016/j.dr.2014.09.001

Volk, A. & Lagzdins, L. (2009). Bullying and victimization among adolescent girl athletes. *Athletic Insight, 11*, 12-25.

Walton, G. M., Cohen, G. L., Cwir, D., & Spencer, S. J. (2012). Mere belonging: The power of social connections. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*(3), 513-532. doi: 10.1037/a0025731

Whitney, I. & Smith, P.K. (1993). A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research, 35*, 3–25.

Williford, A. P., Brisson, D., Bender, K. A., Jenson, J. M., & Forrest-Bank, S. (2011). Patterns of aggressive behaviour and peer victimization from childhood to early adolescence: a latent class analysis. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 40*, 644-655. doi: 10.1007/s10964-010-9583-9

The Recess Project Canada Online Survey for Grades 4-8
Version 1 – Fall, 2014
(n = 464)
Lauren McNamara and Ken Lodewyk

<u>Please answer the following questions about yourself:</u>

1. *What grade are you in? 4 5 6 7 8*

2. *Are you a boy or a girl? Male Female*

3. *What is the name of your school?*
   _____

4. *What city is your school in?*
   _____

5. *Which one is your MOST favorite part of the school day?*

_____ Class _____PE Class (Gym) _____ Indoor Recess _____ Outdoor Recess _____ Clubs/Teams

6. *Why is it your FAVORITE?* _____

7. *Which one is the LEAST favorite part of the school day?*

_____ Class _____PE Class (Gym) _____ Indoor Recess _____ Outdoor Recess _____ Clubs/Teams

8. *Why is it your LEAST favorite?* _____

<u>Please answer the following questions about RECESS:</u>

9. *Do you enjoy recess?*

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

10. *Please list the things you **don't like** about recess?*
    _____

11. *Please list the things you **like** about recess?*
    _____

12. Please rate how much you like (or would like) each of following activities during recess:

A. Being really physically active ("huffing and puffing")?
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

B. Organizing and playing different games and activities with my friends and others.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

C. Having free time to just play ("goof off").
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

D. Hanging out with and talking to others.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

E. Doing crafts, art, or reading.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

F. Dancing with friends and other students my age.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

G. Playing fun games and activities organized by older student-leaders or adults.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

13. Do you have equipment to play with during recess?
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

14. Do you use the equipment provided?
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

Other:

15. If you could create your own recess, what activities would you have?

_____

_____

16. During recess I usually feel:

A. Happy
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

B. Safe
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

C. Nervous
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

D. Embarrassed
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

E. Bored
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

F. Accepted, like I belong
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

G. Lonely
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

H. Confident
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

17. There is enough space for me to participate in the activities I want to during recess.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

18. The length of time we are given for recess is enough. (ENVIRONMENT – TIME)
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

19. I feel that adults give me many activity choices and options during recess.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

20. I am comfortable talking to teachers and staff about problems that happen at recess.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

21. If I find that enjoying recess is difficult, I try to decide how I can sort things out so I can still enjoy it.
Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

22. Do others ever make you feel unwelcome or uncomfortable during recess because of any of the following? (Please check each of the items that apply to you.)

- ○ *A. My race, culture, or skin colour*
- ○ *B. My first language*
- ○ *C. My grades or marks*
- ○ *D. My appearance*
- ○ *E. My religion or faith*
- ○ *F. My family's level of income*
- ○ *G. A disability that I have*
- ○ *H. My activities or hobbies that I like*
- ○ *I. Other reason(s)*

_____
_____

23. During recess, it is easy for me to let someone know their actions are hurtful to me or others.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

24. I get along well with others during recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

25. I don't have any friends during recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

26. During recess, I have been teased (made fun of) because of what I believe, look like, or say.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

27. I have been hit, kicked, or pushed by others on purpose during recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

28. During recess, it seems like others ignore and exclude me on purpose.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

29. When I see someone being treated badly during recess, I feel kind of protective towards them.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

30. How do you think your school could help children who feel left out at recess?

_____

_____

31. I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me at recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

32. I feel that there are friends I can turn to in times of need at recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

33. I can be myself at recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

34. I feel that adults understand my feelings and concerns about recess.

Never Rarely Sometimes Most of the Time All of the Time

Struggling with something? Need to chat or find information about it? You can call 1-800-668-6868 or online chat at KidsHelp.ca

Thank you for completing this survey!

Appendix B: Brock University Ethics Board Approval

Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE:	4/13/2015		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	MCNAMARA, Lauren - Child and Youth Studies		
FILE:	14-223 - MCNAMARA		
TYPE:	Masters Thesis/Project	STUDENT:	Nicole Franklin
		SUPERVISOR:	Lauren McNamara

TITLE: Peer Victimization and the Need to Belong within the Context of Recess

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW Expiry Date: 4/29/2016

The Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 4/13/2015 to 4/29/2016.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 4/29/2016. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.

Appendix C: Parental Information Sheet and Consent Form

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Dr. Lauren McNamara, a researcher in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University, is conducting an online study to understand children's experiences of recess time in elementary school. We are trying to learn about how well schools support children during this time as well as consider any physical and social support they need. The School Board and your child's school principal have approved this study.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

Dr. McNamara would like to ask for feedback from students in an online survey using Survey Monkey to be administered at your child's school. Your child's responses are anonymous – they will not be identified by name and information from individual student records will not be used. It is a 15-20 minute session and the questions are designed to ask about enjoyment, availability of equipment, challenges, social conflict, comfort, and safety.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. Please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your child's teacher by Tuesday, March 3, 2015. On the day of the study, if your child is shy or unwilling, s/he will not be made to participate. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact Dr. Lauren McNamara at lmcnamara@brocku.ca. Thank you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits include the accumulation of knowledge about recess (its necessity, its definition, and any challenges associated with it) that will help shape future policy, program design, and allocations for funding.

If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact Dr. Lauren McNamara at lmcnamara@brocku.ca. Thank you.

– –

CONSENT FORM

Child's Name: _____ Grade ___ Teacher_____

School:

_____

□ I give permission for my child to participate in the online research study conducted by Dr. Lauren McNamara, Brock University.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date**: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BY Tuesday, March 3, 2015

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Under section 72(1) of the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), if a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a children's aid society – regardless of confidentiality agreement. The Act makes it an offence to fail to report. The Act pertains to protection from adults only, but the researcher takes the stance that this includes protection from other minors as well.